



THE ACADEMY OF  
**ST NICHOLAS**

# Attendance Policy

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# The Academy of St Nicholas' Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Every Minute Counts

### Introduction

Excellent attendance is fundamental to the success of students at The Academy of St Nicholas. Education is important. All students need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. The Academy of St Nicholas fully recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure that its students attend regularly and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Poor attendance disadvantages children and we will not accept this for any member of our community.

Parents\* are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time.

### \*Definition of Parents – DFE Advice on School Attendance

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the child that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day. Attendance is a safeguarding issue; it is imperative that any student's unexplained absence from school is investigated as soon as possible.

In line with our commitment to ensure that all students are 'Ready, Respectful, Safe', we believe that school should be a 'safe' place for students to be. We also believe it is important that students are 'ready' to learn each day and ultimately 'ready' to go out into the world as fully functioning citizens.

The academy aims to cater to the needs of individual student's well-being, in an environment that is safe, secure and conducive to work so our students can enjoy and achieve success. There are a variety of reasons for students missing school. Some are unavoidable but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your child's attendance meets both the school and the government's expectations.

A child may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved by the school, the parents and the child by working together. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is better not to cover up his/her absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him/her from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Any issue, such as bullying, which might inhibit school attendance, will be dealt with expeditiously. We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue.

The academy undertakes a wide range of measures to support students where attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required to bring about an improvement. Academy staff are committed to working with parents, other professionals and external agencies at every opportunity to ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality. Many staff within the academy will have a 'partner family' who they will build a close relationship with to ensure high levels of attendance for the student(s) of the family. Students are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

The aims of our policy are:

- to maximise student achievement through outstanding attendance and punctuality;

- provide clear expectations of students to achieve a minimum of 97% attendance, apart from those with chronic health issues;
- create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the academy;
- raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality with parents and students in order to prepare students for the world of work;
- work in partnership with students, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence;
- promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, valued, and encouraged to achieve their aspirations.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

### **Roles, Rights and Responsibilities**

The Academy of St Nicholas believes that all members of our community have a role to play in promoting student attendance and punctuality. By working together we will unite and achieve success. **We will ensure that our students are ‘ready’ and ‘safe’ by fulfilling our roles and responsibilities.**

The Local Governing Body will:

- establish, in consultation with the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, staff and parents, a policy for the promotion of outstanding attendance and punctuality and keep it under review;
- ensure that the policy is communicated to pupils and parents, is non-discriminatory and the expectations are clear;
- Governors will support the academy in maintaining high expectations of attendance and punctuality of pupils and staff.

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School and Senior Staff will:

- ensure the whole school community is consulted about the principles of the academy’s Attendance and Punctuality policy;
- work with all members of the school community to enforce and ensure high expectations of attendance and punctuality at all times;
- be responsible for the communication and implementation and day-to-day management of the policy, guidelines and procedures;
- make clear the local authority’s and the academy’s statutory power regarding the attendance and punctuality of students;
- expect pupils’ and parents’ cooperation in maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality;
- contact families where concerns are raised about absence and punctuality including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues;
- monitor individual attendance and punctuality where concerns have been raised via an agreed appropriate Pastoral Support Plan (PSP);
- ensure the academy’s Attendance and Punctuality policy does not discriminate against any pupil on, grounds of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender assignment;
- ensure staff are clear about the strategies of promoting excellent attendance and punctuality;
- include attendance and punctuality into assemblies;
- support, praise and, as appropriate, reward students for their attendance and punctuality;
- apply sanctions fairly, consistently, proportionately and reasonably – taking account of exceptional circumstances, and offering support where appropriate;
- make alternative provision for students who are unable to regularly attend the academy in order to minimise the disruption to their education;
- take all reasonable measures to protect the safety and well-being of staff and pupils;
- ensure staff model good attendance and punctuality to lessons;

- keep parents informed of their child's attendance and punctuality, good as well as below the expected level, using appropriate methods of engaging them and, where necessary, support them in meeting their parental responsibilities;
- work with external agencies to promote attendance and punctuality;
- monitor the academy's attendance and punctuality data, respond to trends in authorised and unauthorised absence;
- make referrals to the Education Welfare Service.

Staff, including support staff, will:

- take morning and afternoon registers promptly;
- record all absences with the correct code;
- promote positive attendance and punctuality at every opportunity and make students aware of their current attendance and punctuality figures;
- ensure students are aware of their attendance and this is written in the Personal Attendance Record each week;
- challenge students whose attendance and punctuality is a concern;
- interview students when they return to school after an absence;
- contribute to a Pastoral Support Plan for individual students;
- raise any serious attendance and punctuality concerns to the appropriate member of staff - Head of Year, Attendance Officer, EWO, Assistant Head of School;
- congratulate good attendance and punctuality as well as setting appropriate targets for students;
- discuss attendance and punctuality with parents on Reporting Day.

Head's of Year and the Attendance Officer will:

- challenge punctuality each morning at student reception, during assemblies and in form periods;
- conduct first day response telephone calls to parents;
- carry out home visits and liaise with parents when attendance and punctuality concerns arise;
- interview students when attendance and punctuality patterns suggest an issue is likely to arise;
- work closely with the students and families whose attendance is considered PA (90%) and at risk of becoming PA (94%);
- contribute to the Pastoral Support Plan of individual students;
- ensure accuracy of attendance data/coding;
- provide data for form teachers, SLT and Governors;
- provide data for and attend weekly attendance/welfare team meetings;
- monitor and distribute the Traffic Light system;
- ensure that the Alternative Provision register is up to date;
- promote good student attendance and punctuality via forms and assemblies;
- arrange AAA and Attendance Panel Meetings with appropriate staff;
- complete paperwork for referrals/penalty notices.

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- take and act upon individual attendance referrals;
- complete home visits;
- promote an appreciation of the benefits derived from education;
- assist children and the parents of children who are not attending school and contribute to an individual's Pastoral Support Plan;
- assist the academy with strategies and initiatives aimed at preventing non-attendance;
- attend and prepare reports for a weekly attendance/welfare meeting;
- issue Penalty Notices and prepare evidence for prosecution.

The Community Police Officer will:

- liaise with the Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, Safeguarding, Assistant Head of School and the EWO regarding initiatives to encourage positive attendance.

Parents will:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment;
- inform the academy when their child will be absent on the first day and provide a reason, in writing, for the absence;
- inform the academy in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter);
- work in partnership with the academy to resolve any attendance issues;
- make requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised;
- talk to the academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Students will:

- make every effort to attend school every day and on time in order to maximise their life chances;
- communicate with their parents and academy staff if they have any reason for not wishing to attend school;
- ensure any written communication from their parents is submitted to the appropriate member of staff regarding attendance;
- accept rewards and sanctions with dignity and mutual respect.

## Policy

The academy embraces an Every Minute Counts policy and believes that children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Daily Procedures: Registration –

Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8.45 and 8.50am and in the afternoon between 1.50 and 1.55pm. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

Students are actively encouraged to be on site by 8.35am at the very latest. However, students can access our Breakfast Club from 7.30am to receive a free hot breakfast. School starts at 8.40am when the movement bell sounds. All students should be in their form room by 8.43am in preparation for the register being taken at 8.45am. At this time they should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill.

Classes are dismissed at 2.50pm and parents will be informed of any changes to the times of the school day in advance. Students will only be allowed to leave school earlier than the official time if they are requested to do so by a parent. Parents must inform the academy of the reason and time that their child needs to leave via a phone call, email or written note with accompanying medical evidence. The academy will ensure that the time of departure is recorded. Students must report to Student Reception for an exit slip before leaving the academy.

The academy's calendar is available online and if your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning us directly to confirm.

## Absence from School –

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents. **If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the academy each day of absence by telephone or email by 8.30am.** Parents should contact the academy on 0151 230 2570 and select the relevant option for the Attendance Officer or their child's Head of Year to leave a message. They may also email the relevant Head of Year or the Attendance Officer.

If no message is received we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. Parents can reply to our SIMS Keep in Touch text messages. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school.

**Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

The academy may authorise absence(s) under other specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Head of School in advance to secure authorisation. This may include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies. The Head of School may also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as a genuine illness or another unavoidable cause. Examples of authorised absence are:

- Hospital or Orthodontist appointment (evidence required);
- College/Careers Connect/Employment Interview (evidence required);
- Funeral (1 day only);
- Reported illness of less than 4 days (unless medical evidence has been requested).
- Illness of 5 or more days WITH medical evidence or Home Visit.
- Emergency Doctor or Dental appointments (evidence required) \*Routine appointments should be made outside of school hours.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013) the following codes are to be used for **authorised** absences on the register:

**Code I: Illness** – we may request medical evidence from parents.

**Code M: Medical or dental appointments** - parents are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the academy will authorise 'one off' appointments if confirmation of the appointment is provided. The academy may involve the school nurse if a student has a long-term medical issue requiring regular appointments.

**Code B: Educated off site** - this code will be used for students participating on our alternative provision programme.

**Code C: Other circumstances** - this code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, ie – family funeral.

**Code D: Dual Registered** - this code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.

**Code J: Interview** - this code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.

**Code P: Approved sporting activity** - this code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, ie – training sessions, trials and sporting events.

**Code R: Religious Observation** - this code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The academy will only authorise one day absence for religious events.

**Code V: Educational visits and trips** - this code will be used if students are participating on educational excursions.

**Code W: Work Experience** - this code will be used when Year 10 students participate in work experience.

Unauthorised Absence –

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Leave of Absence NOT approved by the academy;
- Absence NOT reported on the day or supported by written explanation upon return to school;
- Absence of 5 or more days WITHOUT medical evidence;
- Routine Doctors/Dental appointments.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013) the following codes are to be used for **unauthorised** absences on the register:

**Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the academy or in excess of agreed period** - if the academy does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided** – we will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation** - if the academy is **not satisfied** with the reason given for absence it will be record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived late to school after 9.30am** - if a pupil arrives after 9.30am without any written or verbal confirmation from parents to explain their child's lateness, the school will mark the pupil with the U code. This means that, although the pupil is in school, they are marked absent for the entire morning. This will be marked as an unauthorised absence and could result in prosecution for parents if the pupil is persistently late.

Continuing absence –

Parents are expected to contact school each day of their child's absence. Frequent absence/attendance below expected target will be rigorously monitored. Students with attendance below 95% are reviewed each week during weekly meetings of key staff, including the Education Welfare Officer.

Medical Appointments –

The academy will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable and we may request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell. Evidence will be kept on the child's file and may consist of a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, letters

concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The academy may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. Therefore the academy has provided 'Medical Authorisation Cards' in the student planner. Parents should take their child's planner to the appointment for the medical professional to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. Parents must ensure the card is stamped, dated and signed by the professional to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment.

### **To whom it may concern**

The Academy of St Nicholas is committed to working with pupils and parents / carers to improve pupil attendance and achievement by reducing absence. Please confirm by signature and organisational stamp that

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert pupil name) has attended a medical appointment today.

Is this condition likely to impact further on her school attendance? YES / NO

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Or

Organisational name / stamp:

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not. To ensure that students are 'safe' the academy may refer a student to the school nurse if a pattern of illness becomes apparent.

### **Safeguarding –**

The academy reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, ie – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. This may be the case particularly if a parent requests a leave of absence during term time. In addition, if the academy suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, ie – local authority children's social care, police. The academy will inform parents if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent.

### **Children Missing From Education –**

The academy recognises that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, ie – sexual abuse or exploitation. The academy follows Liverpool City Council's procedures relating to CME. The academy will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of pupils with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. A referral will be made to Liverpool City Council's CME Team to be investigated further and take appropriate interventions at their level.

The academy reserves the right, however, to contact relevant agencies to seek advice if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits by the EWO. The academy will contact relevant agencies after two days absence without confirmation from parents if the

child is subject to a 'Child in Need' plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, as outlined below;

- Pupils at risk of harm / neglect (the academy will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police);
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (the academy will inform local authority when a GRT student leaves the school without identifying a new destination school);
- Families of Armed Forces (the academy will contact MOD Children's Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education);
- Missing children / runaways (direct referral to Children's Services and Police);
- Children supervised in the Youth Justice system;
- Children who cease to attend a school.

When a pupil returns from a period of extended absence appropriate daily attendance checks will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical well-being will be monitored closely by the safeguarding team in school. Parents will be invited into school with the pupil to meet the Assistant Head of School as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the pupil and family as necessary.

Reluctance to attend the Academy –

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. We would like this to be a last resort and we endeavor to work with families to ensure regular attendance.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the academy or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority. The academy aims to give a clear message that perfect attendance is 100%. Where attendance is between 94% - 97% additional support will be given to enable improvement to be made. Where attendance is below 94% the academy will provide as much support as possible, but parents risk penalty notices and/or prosecution where no commitment is shown to bring about improvement.

For the purposes of monitoring attendance the academy has adopted the 'Traffic Light' (PRAGB) System for monitoring and rewarding attendance.

- Purple (Perfect attendance) 100%
- Green (Acceptable attendance) 97%+
- Amber (Cause for concern) 94.1% – 96.9%
- Red (Poor attendance) 90.1% - 94%
- Blue (Persistent Absentee) 90% and below.

Education –

Under the DFE guidance on attendance (March 2013); 'Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school'. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from the academy the child will be known as 'Electively Home-Educated'. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from the school will be required to confirm this in writing to

the Head of School. This will be forwarded to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will then determine whether or not to accept this new arrangement or challenge it.

#### Leave of Absence in Term Time –

The current law does not give parents any entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in 'exceptional' circumstances and the Head of School must be satisfied that the circumstances are 'exceptional' and warrant the granting of leave. For example, there may have been a bereavement in the family or the Head of School may be aware that a family is under strain and in need of time together. In 'exceptional' circumstances, a request for absence must be made in advance, to the Head of School, by completing the **Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form**.

Parents will then be invited into school to attend a meeting with the Assistant Head of School to discuss the request. During the meeting a date will be agreed by which the student must return to school after the leave of absence. If the academy does authorise a 'Leave of Absence' a Penalty Notice Fine (£60-£120) may be issued to parents if the student does not return to school by this agreed date.

**It is important for parents to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.**

The academy reserves the right to either contact the parents directly or make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care or the police if the school feels a student is potentially at risk being taken out of school during term time. This is particularly relevant to concerns the academy may have about sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.

The academy will seek advice from the local authority if a student fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and we have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil.

The Head of School will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Under DFE guidelines the school may consider taking legal action against a parent(s) who takes leave of absence without the Head of School's permission and apply for a Penalty Notice Fine (£60-£120). The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents. Failure to pay this penalty notice may result in prosecution.

If a request for leave is not authorised by the Head of School and the family takes the student out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which then stays on a child's permanent record and will result in a Penalty Notice Fine (£60 - £120) which will need to be paid by both parents.

#### Persistent Absenteeism –

The academy has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. **Students with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category.** This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

The academy believes that Every Minute Counts and if a student has **20 sessions (10 days)** or more unauthorised absence in a **12 month period** they will already be a part of our 'Spotlight' strategy. Having previously attended a 'Spotlight Attendance Review Meeting' both parents, even if one of the parents does not live with the student, will be invited into the academy to attend a second review meeting with the Assistant Head of School, EWO and Head of Year. The student's attendance will be monitored for a four week period. If the student attends school every day during this period parents will receive a letter congratulating the student on this improvement. If the student is absent from school during this monitoring period parents will be expected to provide **medical evidence** (ie – medical appointment cards, copy of prescription, letters concerning hospital appointments, letters from professional organisations (CAMHS), medical certificate. If there continues to be no improvement in attendance and absences remain unauthorised, the school will complete the prosecution paperwork and begin to undertake the necessary legal action against the parents.

The academy may also consider implementing a **Parenting Contract** if the student continues to be absent from school without authorisation. A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between the academy and parent, and will contain improvement targets with set timescales and an overview of the support provided by the academy to support the child and the family. Parental failure to comply with the contract may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute parents.

This will initially result in a **Penalty Notice Fine**. Each parent will be issued with a £60 fine and will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. **There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty notice.** Failure to pay the Penalty Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500 or three months in prison.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly. The Local Authority may use an ESO as an interim measure before moving directly to prosecution.

-Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent(s) but previous parental failure to engage with the academy and local authority can be cited.

Punctuality –

Punctuality is an important part of self-discipline and is essential to good time management. Students' punctuality, therefore, will be rigorously monitored.

The 1996 Education Act requires that every student should attend school and be on time. It is better to be late than not to be in school at all, **BUT** when students arrive late it makes it difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down, the rest of the class is disrupted and the latecomer misses the, often vital, first part of the lesson and will receive a consequence.

Students who arrive after registration **must** sign in at Student Reception - where a late slip can also be collected. Students should present this to their class teacher but retain it for their lunch time restorative practice.

**It is important to note that any student who arrives to school after 9.30am will be marked with a letter 'U' in the register. This means that, despite being in school, they will technically be marked absent from school for the morning sessions. It will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence and will be used as 1 of the 20 unauthorised sessions that could result in a £60-120 Fixed Penalty Notice issued to both parents.**

If you are aware your child will be arriving late, please complete a Punctuality Note in their planner, send them with a note explaining the circumstances or contact the school by telephone, ie - unplanned appointment at the doctors.

**We do appreciate that many of our students rely on public transport which may make them late for school. However, it is the parents responsibility to make alternative arrangements to get their child to school if they are aware of on-going issues with public transport and road networks that many result in their child being repeatedly late for school. The academy site is open from 7.30am each day for students so, if alternative arrangements result in the student being particularly early for school, they can safely use the facilities in school from this point onwards. We provide a free breakfast for students who attend our Breakfast Club and this**

**can be accessed from 7.30am.**

Students will receive a 15 minute lunch time restorative practice each day that they have poor punctuality. Students will also receive a 60 minute SLT Friday restorative practice when they have poor punctuality twice in one week. Our Educational Welfare Officer will meet with the student and their parents if they have 10 or more incidents of poor punctuality. This meeting will be repeated every tenth time the student does not attend on time. A Pastoral Support Plan will be implemented by the Head of Year for students who have persistent poor punctuality. Parents will be invited to attend a 'Governors Attendance Panel' meeting if their child has more than 35 incidents of poor punctuality.

**Internal Truancy –**

Students who fail to arrive at lessons punctually or who are present in school but who do not attend a lesson are engaging in 'Internal Truancy'. The Student Conduct policy is followed; persistent internal truancy is regarded as an inappropriate conduct issue and could result in a Student Conduct Panel or exclusion.

**Communication with parents –**

The academy will send 'Traffic Light' (PRAGB) letters to parents at the end of each half term. This allows parents to be informed of both their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents are also informed about their child's attendance in the annual full report, at parent's evenings and during any progress review meetings.

**Rewards and Incentives –**

Students are rewarded for excellent attendance in many different ways. Attendance is celebrated in weekly assemblies. For each year group, the form group with the highest attendance each week is rewarded with a form trophy and fast pass lunch wristband. Students with excellent attendance can also attend our timetabled lunch time activities. Attendance Roll Calls are displayed around school and updated on a half-termly basis. Certificates are issued each half term. There is a termly draw for students above 98% attendance and students with 95% and above attendance contribute to our Attendance Tree. Students with the most improved attendance rates are also rewarded as a further incentive. Students with 100% attendance and the most improved attendance are recognised during our annual Awards and Presentation evenings. Year 11 students who attend regular P6 Booster Classes are rewarded with up to £10 off their Prom ticket.

**Improving attendance – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:**

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that they can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure that they have an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
4. Check with the academy if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school.
5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances please write to the Head of School and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
6. Encourage your child to come to school even if they are feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and we will contact you if it becomes necessary.
7. Talk positively about going to school – "What was good about school today?" "Did anything funny

happen?"

8. Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
9. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year before the concerns escalate.

### **Improving attendance – WHAT THE ACADEMY DOES:**

1. Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
2. Informs any parents who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise an absence.
5. Contacts parents when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.
7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student and family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
8. Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
9. Uses the Every Minute Counts policy to encourage students to arrive on time for school.
10. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
11. Works with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern.

## Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

<b>Student Details</b>		
Name	Date of Birth	Form Tutor
Address		
Contact Numbers		
<b>Sibling Details of Compulsory School Age (or other children living in the household)</b>		
Name	Date of Birth	School
Name	Date of Birth	School
Name	Date of Birth	School
<b>I request permission for my child to be absent from school between: -</b>		
First Day of Absence from School	Date of Return to School	Total Number of Absent School Days
<p><b>Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Head of School will not be able to consider your request without your supporting documents.</b></p>		
<p><b>Declaration:</b></p> <p><i>I have read the academy's Attendance and Punctuality policy and understand that I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. <b>Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.</b></i></p>		
Signed: (Parent/Carer)		Date:
Full Name:		
<b>For School Use Only</b>		
The academy has considered your request for leave of absence and your child's absences will be recorded as follows: -		
Number of Authorised Sessions:	Number of Unauthorised Sessions:	Number of Unauthorised Sessions to date:
Signed:		Date:
Position:		

**We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement from us first. The Head of School cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance.**

Any disagreement between estranged parents should be resolved prior to submitting this request.

*Original signed and completed forms to be retained with pupil's records. Copy should be returned to the parent/carer of the pupil to confirm authorised or unauthorised absence prior to the intended absence period.*

## Attendance Graduated Response.

Attendance is the responsibility of every member of staff within the academy to ensure students are 'Ready' and 'Safe'. Although the diagram below would suggest that individual staff have sole responsibility for certain cohorts of students, they do not. The Academy of St Nicholas believes that the more staff involved in a students' experience will result in greater impact.

### Form Tutor – Level 1 (100% - 97%)

The Form Tutor is responsible for every student in their form group. They will be provided with support when a student's attendance becomes a concern. As a Form Tutor you should ensure all students complete their Personal Attendance Record in the student planner each week. Form Tutors should contact home to inform parents of positive and negative conduct, ie - praise if attendance has improved as well as inform if attendance has declined.

### Senior Leadership – Level 2 (96.9% - 94%)

Senior Leadership will become aware that students in the Amber zone are at risk regarding poor attendance. A Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) may be created if appropriate or Attendance Mentor assigned. Letter A1 will be generated. An EWO referral may be required. Students and parents will be invited for an Attendance Review Meeting at 94% and AAA if appropriate. Students will form part of the 'Radar' strategy.

### Head of Year – Level 3 (93.9% - 90.1%)

The Head of Year is responsible for the attendance of their year group, with the at risk of PA cohort being a regular group that they will personally communicate with. Letter A2 will be generated when students fall within the Red zone. The EWO will receive a referral and PSP's may need to be altered at this stage. An Attendance Mentor will be allocated and the student will form part of the 'Spotlight' strategy. A Spotlight Attendance Review Meeting takes place including AAA.

### Attendance Officer – Level 4 ( - 90%)

The Attendance Officer will oversee the whole school attendance but have a specific focus on students in the PA category. Letter A3 will be generated and the EWO will begin a formal notice period if appropriate.

### Head of School – Level 5

The Head of School will interview any student and their parents when a number of attendance interventions have failed to have impact.

### Governors – Level 6

The Governors will conduct an Attendance Panel Meeting.

The **Attendance Officer** and **EWO** will work with all staff and students.

## Punctuality Graduated Response.

Students will be 'Ready' and 'Safe' by demonstrating outstanding punctuality. Excellent punctuality is the responsibility of every member of staff within the academy. All members of our community should model excellent punctuality and encourage students to prepare for the world of work by taking pride in their punctuality.

