St Martins School Attendance Policy

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Policy Owner:	Senior Leadership Team / Designated Safeguarding Lead

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support Parent/Carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy takes into account the additional vulnerabilities of our school community due to their complex needs. All students at St Martins have an education and health care plan (EHCP).

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Council

The Academy Council is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Where necessary notifying local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer (ISAO)and possibly issuing fixed-penalty notices

3.3 The Attendance Administrator

The school attendance administrator:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Monitors school-level absence data and reporting it to Academy Councillors
- Reports concerns about attendance to the DSL and Headteacher.
- Works with the local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer (ISAO) to tackle persistent and severe absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Works with the DSL, Family Support Team and Headteacher in deciding when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

3.4 Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

- If an attendance issue is identified, the pastoral team will, in the first instance, arrange a meeting to highlight any support that may be required and put together a supportive plan to reengage the student.

- Pass on any relevant information regarding absence to DSL, Family Support Team, Headteacher and/or Attendance Administrator

3.5 School Admin/Office Staff

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from Parent/Carers about absence and record it on the school's Management Information System – Arbor.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and before the start of the afternoon sessions after lunchtime. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The initials of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. **Registers are taken at the same time for all students at their respective site.**

St Martins

Students must arrive in school between 8:45am-9:00am on each school day.

The morning register in school will be taken between 8:45- 9:00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the afternoon session in school will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

Horizons

Students attending Horizons are expected to be at the Friar Gate site between 8:45am –9:00am

The register for the morning session at Horizons (Friar Gate) will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the afternoon sessions will be kept open until 1:00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

- The student's Parent/Carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).
- Parent/Carers will either phone the school office and give the reason for their child's absence or record the reason for absence using the Arbor parental app.
- Parent/Carers will make contact with the school every day for the period of absence.
- If no contact is made by Parent/Carers the Attendance Administrator will contact the family to find reasons for the absence.
- If contact cannot be made, this will be passed to the Family Support Team who will attempt to contact the family. A home visit may be necessary if contact can't be established. (please see appendix)
- If the Family Support Team are unsuccessful in gaining a reason for absence it may be appropriate for referrals to be made to external agencies e.g. Police and Children's social care, this decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's Parent/Carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. **We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.**
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- If a student has an ongoing absence, Parents/Carers should maintain daily contact with the school, home visits should be conducted by school staff on at least a weekly basis during the period of absence.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's Parent/Carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's Parent/Carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to **section 5** to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (U code) until the student arrives in school. Late will then be marked on the register and a reason given in the notes box.
- Late due to circumstances out of the family's control such as taxi issues or unprecedented traffic situations will be marked on the register in the notes section.
- Patterns relating to late marks will be tracked and analysed. Action will be taken as appropriate and necessary.
- Any repeated reasons for lateness must be discussed and agreed with a member of the senior management team. These will be noted and reviewed as necessary.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child who is expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on day one of their absence with their Parent/Carers to ascertain the reason initially by telephone. If contact cannot be made, a home visit and a safe and well check may be necessary. This can be made by a member of the attendance team or a member of the family support team. Priority will be given to those identified as having additional vulnerabilities e.g. CP plan, CIN, LAC, PP.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary with referrals made if required.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.6 Reporting to Parent Carers

Attendance will be reported to Parent/Carers annually within the written end of year report.

Attendance levels may be reported termly or on an adhoc basic if attendance is causing concern.

Parents/Carers can access live attendance figures via the Arbor parental app.

The local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer (ISAO) may be alerted to any attendance causing concern and may contact Parent/Carers directly.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. There is no blanket approaches to authorising term time leave.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** could include but limited to:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.
- Family bereavement.
- Term time absence for service family during term time

  School term time absence for service children: teachers guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

5.2 Reducing persistent absence and severe absence

The persistent absence threshold is 10%, if a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. If a student has missed more than 50% of school sessions, they are referred to as severely absent.

- Persistent/severe absence will be monitored closely. This will take the form of in school monitoring of registers and attendance data. Where concerns

around a student's attendance are identified a notification letter may be sent to parents/carers. This will be assessed on a case by case based dependent on the reasons for absence, this may be supplemented with phone conversations. A home visit may be made if necessary. Students who are persistently/severely absent may be discussed with the local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer dependent on the reason they are persistently/severely absent.

- If concerns continue, further notification letters may be sent with subsequent meetings arranged with the Family Support Team and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Throughout, St Martins will adopt a supportive approach to try and avoid fines/legal sanctions. Where appropriate, a package of support will be created to help increase attendance this will be in the form of an attendance support plan, which will involve the student, Parent/Carers and school staff.
- Further support may be sought through the SEND team or Social Care.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine Parent/Carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each Parent/Carer must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- If a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within 3 years the amount is £160 per parent per child (there is no discount if paid within 21 days)
- If a third offence is committed within the same 3-year period, a penalty notice is generally not issued. Instead, the local authority may consider prosecution or other legal action. If convicted in court, fines can be up to £1000 or £2500, depending on the offence. Other orders may also be made.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Attendance will be rewarded termly in the form of an in-school celebration event, this includes students who have shown improved levels of attendance.
- A class attendance league will exemplify the class with the highest levels. The class (es) who have the highest attendance levels at the end of each term will be rewarded in line with school reward initiatives.
- Special mentions for improving attendance will be made in Key Stage assemblies as appropriate.
- Students achieving 100% attendance over the whole academic year will receive an award during the end of year celebration event.

7. Attendance monitoring

- The Attendance Administrator at our school monitors student absence on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.
- A student's Parent/Carers is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).
- Students' Parent/Carers are expected to phone school every day that a student is absent, with the exception of when a fixed term period of absence is required for example 48 hours for sickness or diarrhoea in which case contact must be made with school to inform them of the reason and length of absence.
- If a student's absence goes above 3 days, the school may contact the Parent/Carers of the student to discuss the ongoing reason for absence and possibly carry out a home visit/virtual check in and/or inform relevant agencies.
- If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their Parent/Carers, we will consider involving the local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer (ISAO).
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Student-level absence data will be collected and published.
- The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Council.
- Attendance will be tracked and monitored using Arbor. Attendance concerns will be recorded on My Concern, the school's safeguarding recording system on a case-by-case basis.

- **Weekly headline figures will be shared with key stage leads to discuss with their teams. This will enable a whole school approach to managing attendance and for all staff to have an understanding our how St Martins compares to the local and national trends.**
- Fortnightly attendance monitoring meetings will take place with key stage leads to discuss and identify any concerns. These meetings will be chaired by the attendance lead who is also the school Designated Safeguarding Lead. The aim of the meetings is to discuss matters wider than headline figures and to unpick concerns on a **student-by-student basis, giving a greater chance of early intervention and support.**
- The attendance lead will meet with the local authority Inclusion and School Attendance Officer (ISAO) at least termly via a **targeted support meeting (TSM).**

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority, or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Attendance Administrator and Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Academy Council.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the Working together to improve school attendance Chapter 8.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Amended Timetable	may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
J1	Interview/admissions meeting	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario

Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home to school travel for the pupil and they have not done so (including where they are in the process of doing so but have not yet done it)
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil is well enough to attend but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the

		spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend their school.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Student Absence Management Procedure

