



# De La Salle School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Status</b>	Internal
<b>Responsible Governors' Committee</b>	Behaviour and Welfare
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Deputy Headteacher
<b>Ratified Date</b>	October 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2022

**Version Control**

<b>Version Date</b>	<b>Changes/Comments</b>
October 2021	Agreed policy initial version



## DE LA SALLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### Equality Statement

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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, to ensure they attain their true potential.

### The Importance of Regular Attendance

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High standards of attendance and punctuality demonstrate a commitment to education and they are a sound preparation for the world of work; any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect learning. Children's attendance at school is the legal responsibility of all parents and carers and permitting absence without a good reason may result in prosecution.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – students, parents/carers and all members of staff.

Research outlines that missing out on lessons, leaves children vulnerable to falling behind both academically and socially and studies show children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in all phases of education.

Local authorities and 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.

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.
- Guide parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure pupils are punctual to their lessons.

### Rights and Responsibilities

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Parents are responsible for ensuring 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 utilise a graded response to school absence – shown over page

## School Procedures

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### **To help maintain the focus on good attendance the school will:**

- Register attendance and punctuality accurately in line with Health and Safety regulations
- Report on attendance and punctuality in each pupil's regular academic report
- Contact parents if the level of an individual's attendance and/or punctuality gives cause for concern
- Parents are expected to ring the school on the first day of absence and continue to contact the school on each subsequent day of absence
- A signed parental letter confirming absence is expected on return to school, if telephone contact has not been made
- Emails are not accepted as a valid means of reporting an absence

### **If a student is absent, the school will:**

- Telephone home on the first day of absence if we have not heard from a parent or carer, and each day subsequently until the student returns to school
- Any safeguarding concerns will be followed with a home visit
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with the relevant Progress Leader or the Key Stage Leader if attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern
- Consult the Student Attendance and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance falls below 97%
- The school reserves the right to ask for medical evidence of absence
- Write to parents to inform them if attendance is becoming a concern or if the student is close to becoming a PA student

### **Signing out procedures:**

- A student who wishes to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter or an appointment card from their parent / carer and show it to their Head of Year
- They must sign out at Reception, and sign in again on their return to school
- Appropriate arrangements should be made to collect the child from school, or to make their own way safely to their destination, in a timely manner
- Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at Student Services

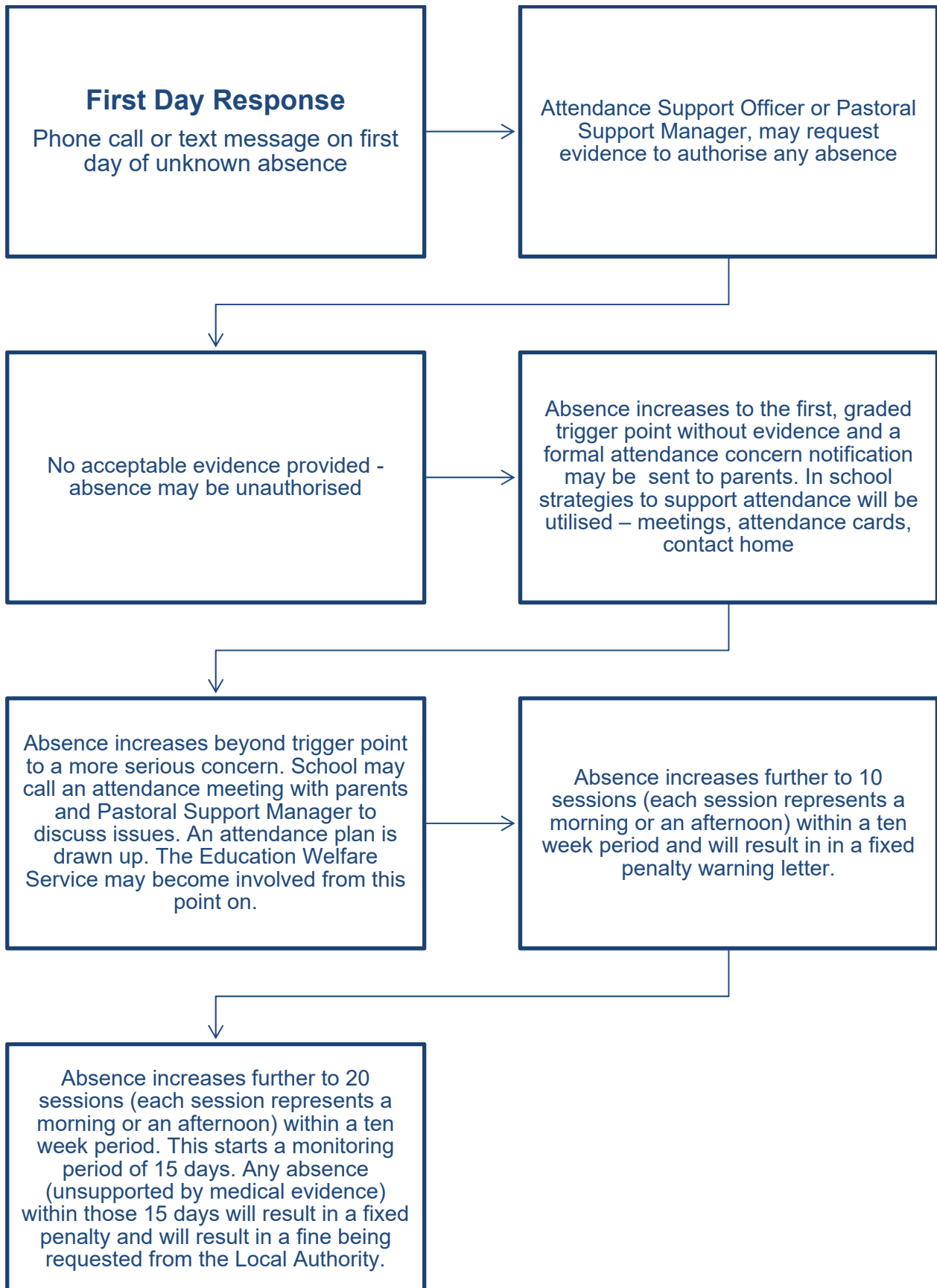
### **Students not attending in circumstances relating to Covid** (directions followed in DfE document dated 6 Aug 2020 and any subsequent updates):

- pupils with symptoms of Covid 19, awaiting the results of a PCR test, will be marked with an X. If a positive PCR result is given, they will be marked with an I, until they return to school. If a negative result and student still ill, they will be marked with an I, until they remain ill. If a negative result is received and are no longer ill, but do not return to school, they will be marked with a U.

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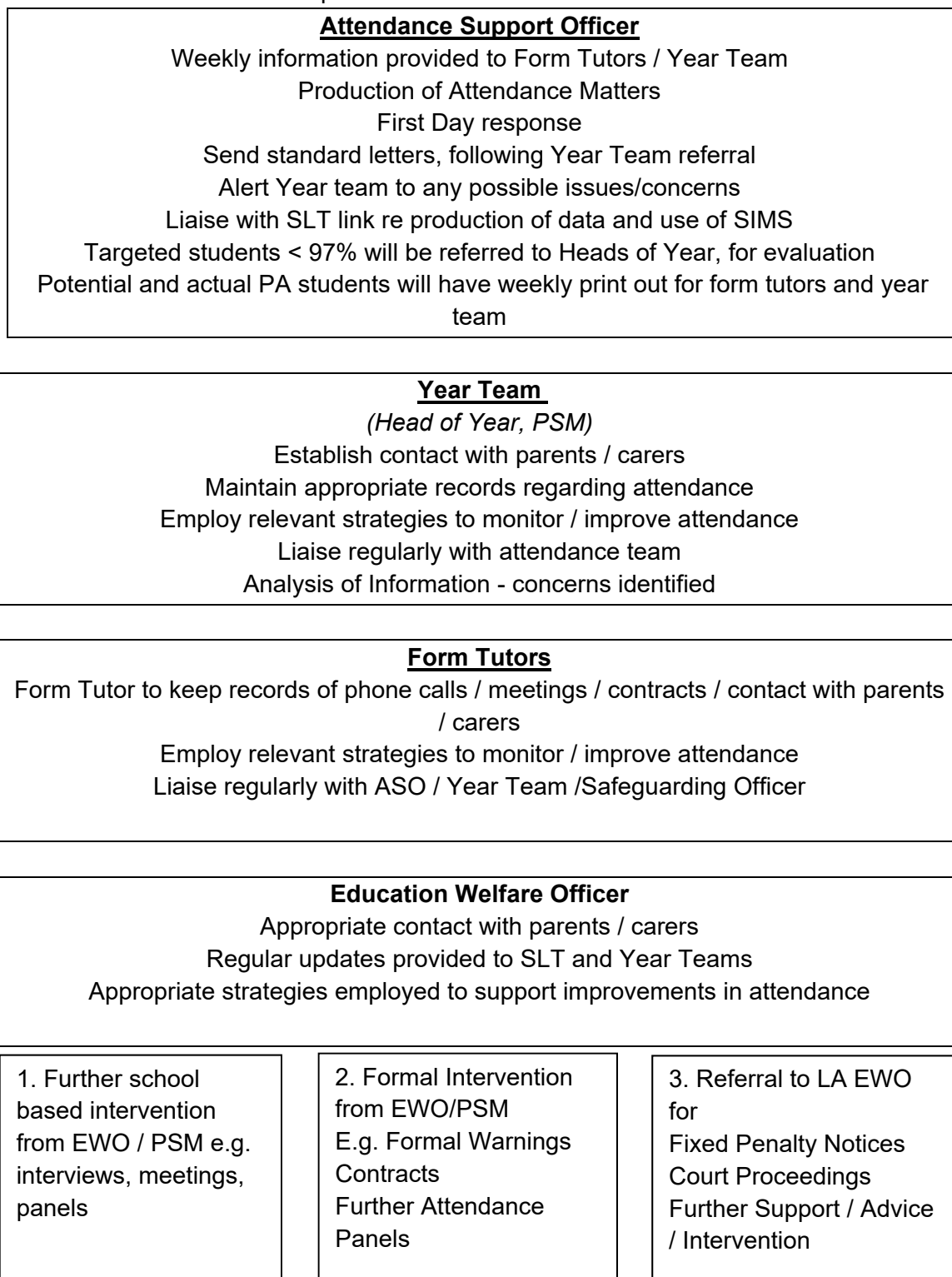
## Escalation of Concerns

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# De La Salle – Attendance Responsibilities 2021-22

This plan recognises the key roles that all staff play in supporting our drive for continued improvements in whole school attendance. The responsibilities outlined are not an exhaustive list, but form key aspects of the job specifications of those integral to the success of this critical aspect of the school.



Percentage attendance*	Suggested Time Frame for Intervention*
above 97%	Involvement in attendance rewards / praise.
94 – 96.9%	Form Tutor intervention. Monitor patterns/ establish home contact
92 – 94.9%	Year Team basic intervention. Liaise with ASO / Form Tutor
90 - 91.9%	Formal Intervention from Year team – visits / monitoring
<90%	Student is a PA - Formal Intervention from EWO

\*This is a guide. Cases must be treated according to individual circumstances. Regular and informed discussions with EWO / SLT should support decisions. Care should be taken to ensure consistency across year groups / families.

## 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 expected to investigate, support and challenge absence that is approaching or meets the above threshold and must work on ensuring no students are given PA status, as this will affect academic performance and pastoral resilience.

Parents are informed regularly when their child is nearing PA status and will be offered supportive strategies, to assist in improving attendance.

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

Government expectation is for each student to attain a minimum attendance level of 97%, to enable maximum academic achievement to be met. Pupils falling below 97% will follow the pathway outlined above, up to and including a fixed penalty notice.

The following table is a guide to show when a child would become a persistent absentee:

Term	10%
Half-term 1	7 or more sessions
Half-term 1-2 (Autumn Term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (Autumn and Spring Terms combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

Students who are classed as PA in the previous academic year, will be requested to provide medical evidence to support any future absences.

## The school day

The school opens to pupils at 7:45am. Pupils should be at their form room by 8:25am, ready for the register to be taken. The morning register is recorded at 8:30am and 'saved' as soon as possible after this time.

The gate on Alder Road is locked at 8.30 am. Pupils entering school after 8:30am are recorded as late 'L' on the register. Between 8.30am and 9.00am they must enter via the entrance by the main hall and sign in with a member of the pastoral team, who will record the time they arrive and

the reason why they are late. They will be placed on a 15min break time detention, held by the pastoral team, on the day they are late. Failure to attend the detention will result in a lunchtime detention; failure to attend this will result in an after-school detention and parents will be contacted.

Students arriving after 9.00am must enter via the main reception and sign in there; they will also follow the same sanctions procedure.

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 their allocated seating area in the hall 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 4 (12.10pm)

### **Consequences for punctuality issues**

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- Any student arriving late for school, will receive a 15 min break time detention
- Failure to attend will result in a 30-minute lunchtime 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**

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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. Notes should be handed in at the Reception, with any associated medical evidence attached.

### **Medical Appointments**

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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**

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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.

### **Pupils educated off site**

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Pastoral Support Managers are responsible for monitoring the attendance of pupils 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)**

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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 are issued to each parent for every child concerned.

### **Penalty Notices**

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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**

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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)**

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- 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:**

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- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Minding the house/waiting for deliveries or workmen
- Family holidays that are not agreed prior to departure
- Student not attending school without a valid medical reason

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**

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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.

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

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- 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 Local Authority, Child Missing in Education 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 has an EHCP, 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 analysed, to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and progress and support and inform policy/practice
4. Form tutors and Progress Leaders are given attendance percentages and other pastoral data every two weeks to check attendance patterns and to set targets
5. Good attendance awards will be presented throughout the school year
6. 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.
7. Parents will be reminded regularly via letters, texts, on the school website and at various meetings of the importance of good attendance.
8. The Deputy Head will make a report to the Governors at least three time a year on attendance matters.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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