



ATTENDANCE POLICY (201)

Introduction

Attendance in School is an important requirement and the School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment and well-being. As stated in the statutory guidance (August 2024), attendance 'is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, including their safeguarding and welfare, and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school'.

This policy has been drawn up with due regard to the following requirements:

The School Attendance Regulations 2024

DfE Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)

Keeping Children safe in education (Sept 2024)

Working together to safeguard children (DfE Dec 2023)

The Senior Deputy Head is the School Attendance Officer and in conjunction with the Heads of House is responsible for managing and tracking pupil attendance and keeping the policy up to date and compliant. The Senior Deputy Head can be contacted on rtoner@stmarysascot.com. The School is required by law to accurately record and maintain two separate registers: an Attendance Register and an Admissions Register. All pupils must be placed on the Admission Register and have their attendance recorded in the Attendance Register.

This policy covers routine attendance matters but also the process to respond to pupils who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods.

Attendance Registration

In line with regulatory requirements, the Attendance register is recorded twice a day. The School uses FastVein technology which uses biometric data as the most efficient way to register the presence of each pupil in school.

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday to Friday	Boarding pupils and Day Boarders Register open from 7am/Breakfast and closes at times specific for each year group of boarding pupils. Day boarders must scan in at Reception by 8.15am Register taken at all lessons during the day	The afternoon register opens at 11.15am and closes at 13.46pm. All pupils in school are registered by scanning into lunch in the pupil Refectory. Register taken at all lessons during the day	Evening meal scanning between 6pm and 8pm. Firelist on Fastvein checked by all staff on duty in boarding areas. Head of House on duty and Senior Boarding Person confirm status of pupils off site.
Saturday	Morning registration between 8.45am and 9.30am.	Lunch registration for pupils on site between 12.15pm and 1pm.	Evening meal scanning between 6pm and 7pm.

	House meeting register taken by Head of House or House Captain.	Year 7-11 pupils on site register between 3.45pm and 5.00pm at the House on duty. Sixth Form on site register between 12pm and 6pm.	Firelist on Fastvein checked by all staff on duty in boarding areas. Head of House on duty and Senior Boarding Person confirm status of pupils off site.
Sunday	Morning registration between 8.45am and 9.30am.	Lunch registration for pupils on site between 12.15pm and 1pm. Year 7-11 pupils on site register between 3.45pm and 5.00pm at the House on duty. Sixth Form on site register between 12pm and 6pm.	Evening meal scanning between 6pm and 7pm. Firelist on Fastvein checked by all staff on duty in boarding areas. Head of House on duty and Senior Boarding Person confirm status of pupils off site.

Failure to Register

The School Reception team will create a list of any pupils on site who have not registered in either session Monday to Friday. The member of Residential staff on call each day will account for such pupils by visiting their timetabled lesson to confirm their presence.

On Saturday and Sunday, the senior residential staff will create a list of pupils on site who have not registered and complete a prompt follow up check.

Pupils who fail to register twice can expect a Blue ticket sanction to help pupils understand the importance of registration. See Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Absence

A Day boarder will be recorded as Late if they arrive after 8.16am and Absent (N) if they have not arrived after 8.31am. The absence will be followed up by the School Reception team and the record will be updated when the reason is explained on that day. The School will respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, the safeguarding and behaviour policies.

The School Reception team will work alongside the Heads of House and pastoral team to monitor absence and record reasons for absence on the school system. This includes:

- monitoring calls and/or emails from parents;
- liaising with pastoral leads when valid reasons for absence are unclear; and

- should there be a question about the whereabouts of any pupil marked absent (i.e. no telephone message received from the parent giving a reason for the absence), communicating with parents when a pupil arrives late or is unexpectedly absent from school.

Punctuality

The School day begins at 8.15am with movement to Chapel, House meetings or tutor meetings. Pupils should ensure that they are punctual at the start of each day and for every class and other timetabled activity. Lateness wastes time and pupils should try to think ahead and show consideration for others (see the School Punctuality Policy (313)). Pupils may receive a blue ticket sanction after the second occasion of lateness to a lesson.

Termly Attendance

Term dates are published at least one year in advance, providing sufficient time for holidays to be arranged outside of term time. As a boarding school, parents are reminded of the importance of adhering to the term dates, ensuring pupils do not miss lessons at the beginning and end of terms, and also arranging departures for exeat weekends at the designated time to minimise disruption to learning.

Term normally starts on a Sunday evening and pupils should arrive under normal circumstances as follows:

Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 between 5.00 and 6.00pm

Pupils in years 10, 11, LVI between 6.00 and 7.00pm

Pupils in the UVI between 7.00 and 8.00pm

Term ends officially on the last Friday of term after the final assembly. Pupils may be collected as follows:

Pupils in years 11, LVI and UVI from 11.00am

Pupils in years 7 to 10 from 12.00 noon

Parents with daughters starting or finishing at different times should adhere to the later time in both cases.

Parents may, if they wish, collect their daughter at those times or at any time during the remainder of the day. Pupils who are dependent on flight schedules may when necessary and with express permission, leave at any time on the Friday and return a day late. All special circumstances should be referred to the pupil's Head of House.

Occasionally the Lent term finishes or the summer term starts on a different day, depending on the timing of Easter Sunday.

Requests for exceptional absence

All requests for absence from school and especially any absence impacting lesson attendance, must be sent to the Head of House at the earliest opportunity and these are raised at the weekly Head of House meeting for consideration by the Headmistress and the Senior Deputy.

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As a general rule, pupils may not be absent from school because of family holidays but in very exceptional circumstances the Headmistress will consider a written request before any commitment or booking has been made.

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for 'unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance' is not appropriate. Examples include a holiday that has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head, or the reason for absence has not been provided.

The School recognises that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

In the case of persistent non-attendance with safeguarding implications, the Senior Deputy Head will liaise with the RBWM Attendance Officer.

Exeat arrangements

Detailed information concerning exeat regulations appears in the section entitled Exeats and Outings (206) in the Boarding Life section of this School Handbook. Parents are asked to abide by all exeat regulations, and to refer all relevant matters to their daughter's Head of House.

Pupils must scan out when leaving the school site for an exeat, or local visit and scan in when returning to the school. Failure to do so may result in the pupil receiving a Failure to Scan sanction.

Absence for Illness/Medical Appointments

Parents are asked to contact the School Reception team if a pupil is unable to return to School because of illness or a medical appointment and follow up with an email to their daughter's Head of House as early as possible and preferably before 8.15am. Routine medical appointments should take place during the holidays or outside lesson timings, where possible, to minimise absence from academic lessons.

If a pupil is absent from a lesson the member of staff in charge will try to ascertain her whereabouts, before reporting her absence to reception. Reception staff will follow up on absent pupils by checking the Health Centre lists, the fire lists and with Heads of House and Year Coordinators.

Pupils are expected to attend all academic lessons and activities unless there are particular reasons for their absence eg illness. Pupils are required to scan into all meals, when they go to the Health Centre, and for tennis and music lessons, and this data is then available for staff to view on SMAPP.

If a pupil is unwell during a lesson the member of staff will send her, accompanied if necessary, to the Health Centre and later check that she has been attended to.

Sickness return

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The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness, or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

If a pupil is believed to be missing

A set of clear procedures exists which should be followed if a pupil is believed to be missing from the school site. This is set out in the Safeguarding Policy (412a). During normal working hours this should be reported in the first instance to the School Reception who will alert the Residential member on call and the Head of House on duty for assistance.

Child Student Visa Pupils

Pupils who attend St Mary's under a Child Student Visa must inform the School of travel details (including details of their transport arrangements from the airport to School) and all travel and accommodation plans for exeat and at the end of term. The information is recorded centrally.

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