



De La Salle School

Attendance Policy

Last Update: September 2022
Ratified by Governors: 6th October 2022
Next Review: September 2023

Statement of Intent

De La Salle School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance and punctuality is crucial. As a School, we will organize and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognize that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilized whenever there are concerns about attendance. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Children missing from Education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognizes that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorized absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Local Authority, Social Care or Police).

All students that are missing from school for a minimum period of 10 consecutive school days and where contact cannot be made to explain their absence will be referred to the Local Authority (LA) for further investigation. Continued failure to contact the family may result in the student being removed from roll.

Rights and Responsibilities

De La Salle School expects students to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.

De La Salle School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

De La Salle School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate absenteeism and lateness.

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De La Salle School will work in partnership with parents and students to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

De La Salle School will include in work reviews to parents on achievement, student's attendance at least annually.

Students will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time. Students will attend all lessons punctually.

Students can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.

Students will be listened to and respected.

Students will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on each morning of absence by 9.00am on 02045396559. All absences should be confirmed in writing when their child returns to school (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language). Parents are responsible for keeping the school informed on prolonged absences. Absent messages can also be sent through Parentmail or email to attendance@dlsbasildon.org

Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff.

The school does not authorize holidays in term time in accordance with government policy. Parents do not have a *right* to take children on holiday in term time.

Leave of absence must be granted in advance by the school. All applications will be considered by the Headteacher and only exceptional circumstances authorized.

School Attendance and the Law

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. In addition, the Supreme Court ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Headteacher's granting

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leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and they consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without the permission of the school will be marked as unauthorized. Parents/carers may be referred to the Local Authority with a request made by the school to issue a Penalty Notice fine. The penalty for each parent/carer issued with a Penalty Notice is £120 for each child, however if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, it is reduced to £60. (Service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post). All penalties are paid to the LA. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Attendance Compliance Team will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 4441. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

A penalty notice may be issued if there are 6 or more unauthorized sessions due to leave of absence taken in the first two weeks of September.

Registration

At De La Salle School an electronic registration system is used.

All notes from parents regarding a student's absence will be stored on the student's file and retained for three years.

Start and Close of Registration

De La Salle School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Registration begins at 8.45 am and 2.05 pm each school day and registers will be closed 15 minutes after these times.

If a student arrives after the register has closed, they should report to Student Services to be entered into the late record book.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their Form Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Students arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorized absence for that session and given a detention.

Where a student is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting.

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The school day commences at 8.40 a.m. with a warning bell and ends at 3.15 p.m. The day consists of one registration period, five teaching periods which includes PM registration and two breaks (mid-morning and lunch). If students are not inside the school gates by 8.40 – they are considered late.

If a student is late for the first time they will be given a lunchtime detention. Any further lateness within that term will incur an after school detention for 1 hour. Parents will be notified on the day of any detention by text message.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child’s education and we need a parent/carer’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Local Attendance Adviser, Local Authority, Family Solutions or Social Care.

Use of Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

| <i>Code</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Meaning</i> |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| / | Present am | Present |
| / | Present pm | Present |
| B | Educated off site | Approved education activity |
| C | Other authorized circumstances | Absence agreed by school |
| D | Student attending another establishment | Approved education activity |
| E | Excluded | authorized absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | authorized absence |
| G | Family holiday NOT agreed or in excess of agreement | Unauthorized Absence |
| H | Family holiday (Agreed) | authorized absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental) | authorized absence |
| J | Interview | Approved education activity |
| L | Late before register closed | Present |
| M | Medical / dental appointments | authorized absence |
| N | No reason yet provided | Unauthorized absence |
| O | Unauthorized absence | Unauthorized absence |

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|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved education activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorized absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorized absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorized absence |
| U | Late (after registration closed) | Unauthorized absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved education activity |
| X | Non compulsory school age absence | Not counted |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted |
| Z | Student not yet on role | Not counted |
| # | School closed to students | Not counted |

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording student's attendance or absence.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a student.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff Responsible for Process

The Student Services Manager is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns and for logging attendance information onto the computerized system.

The form tutor is responsible for taking the register daily in the morning.
The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register and PM register. Including the following:

- ◆ ensuring that symbols used are appropriate
- ◆ ensuring all mistakes are amended
- ◆ ensuring the registers are taken promptly at all times, where accuracy is of paramount importance especially in an emergency situation – ie during a fire.

De La Salle School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process.

Each pupil should be called by name when the register is being taken.

Procedures for following up Absence/Lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school every morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then De La Salle School will:

Initiate our automated system 'Truancy Call' which will automatically telephone and email the contacts with parental permission provided by the Parent/Carer until a reason for absence has been obtained. The Truancy Call system requests an answer and once the Parent/Carer responds the calls will cease. The Parent/Carer's response to Truancy Call is free of charge.

If the absence continues to be unauthorized the parent will be requested to come in for a meeting.

This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties, which are preventing the student from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If a student is absent for 5 days or more medical evidence must be provided before this can be authorized.

If the student is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the student to ease back into the school system. In the event of a student returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the student as possible.

Where a student is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting. If the student continues to have unauthorized Absences/lateness the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a penalty notice for irregular attendance.

Authorized and Unauthorized Absences

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that parents may not authorize absence; only schools can do this.

Absence for the following reasons could be authorized where parents have confirmed the absence in writing on the child's return to school (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

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- ◆ Sickness
- ◆ Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- ◆ If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the Headteacher

Absence may be recorded as unauthorized when due to:

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Haircuts
- ◆ Missed bus
- ◆ Slept late
- ◆ No uniform
- ◆ Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- ◆ Minding the house
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Holidays

It may be necessary for the school to ask the parent/carer to provide written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

In the belief that students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and student work reviews will be used in conjunction with rewards for individuals. Students in the lower school that have 100% attendance in a week will be put in a draw for tickets to queue jump at lunch time. Students that have 100% attendance for a half term will be allowed to have a non uniform day when other students will be wearing uniform. All students with 100% attendance over a term will receive a certificate.

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Parents, students and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorized and unauthorized absence.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality. Students who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues, which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (bullying etc needs to link with behaviour policy and equal opportunities policies).