St Annes College Grammar School

Attendance Policy

Proprietor	St Annes College Ltd
Policy owner	Principal, Miss Abigail Welsby
Attendance lead	Mrs Andrea Burrell, Vice Principal and DSL
Approved by	Approved by Proprietor
Policy date	September 2026
Effective from	27th September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or sooner if requirements change

Regular attendance helps pupils learn and belong. SACGS acts promptly when a pupil is absent, checks safety, listens to children and families, and addresses barriers to attendance. This policy explains how we keep the admission and attendance registers, respond to absence, support pupils who struggle to attend, and share required information with local authorities.

1 Scope and legal framework

This policy applies to pupils on the school roll in Nursery, Juniors, Seniors and Sixth Form. Compulsory school age duties and particular attendance codes apply only where relevant to the pupil's age. It is based on the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly paragraph 15, the July 2026 Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), Children Missing Education guidance, the Equality Act 2010, and the statutory EYFS framework where applicable. The school follows applicable local authority notification arrangements. Independent schools are not required to supply the daily attendance data return imposed on state-funded schools.

The proprietor ensures the admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately in accordance with the 2024 regulations. The school offers full-time education to pupils of compulsory school age, subject to exceptional temporary arrangements described below. Attendance concerns may also be safeguarding, SEND or health concerns and are assessed accordingly.

2 Responsibilities

The Principal/Propriateor has overall operational responsibility, and assures that records and returns are accurate, makes decisions and escalates persistent issues. The Vice Principal leads the attendance strategy, examines data and coordinates support with the Pastoral Lead and SENCO; as DSL she leads safeguarding decisions. The office administers first-day contact and returns, under the Principal's oversight. Class and form tutors take registers promptly and report missing pupils and emerging patterns. The SENCO checks access to provision, reasonable adjustments and EHCP implications. All staff report concerns promptly to the DSL.

Parents should ensure their child attends each timetabled school day, arrives on time, notify the office before 9 am if absent and on each further day unless an agreed arrangement is made, explain the reason and expected return, maintain up-to-date contacts and work with the school on support. We seek three emergency contacts wherever reasonably possible. Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult when school feels difficult and to take part in planning support. A parent's report is considered but the school decides the register code under the regulations.

3 Admission register

The school keeps an electronic admission register for every pupil admitted. The office checks required identity, address, parent and previous-school details, start date and other prescribed fields, and updates changes as soon as practicable. The Principal oversees accuracy, especially during MIS migration, and ensures the history of each amendment is preserved, showing the original and amended entries, date, reason and the person making the change. Records are backed up and accessible for inspection.

A pupil's name is removed only when a specific ground in regulation 9 of the 2024 regulations applies and the required enquiries, supporting evidence and local authority notification have been completed. Prolonged absence, unpaid fees, a part-time timetable or a parental statement alone must not trigger an unsupported deletion. The admission and attendance records are amended together when lawful deletion occurs. The school records the legal ground, evidence, enquiries, destination where known, notification and decision-maker, and cooperates with children-missing-education enquiries. For an EHCP pupil the placing authority is involved promptly; the school does not assume its mainstream independent status removes its information-sharing and safeguarding responsibilities.

4 Attendance register and punctuality

The electronic attendance register records each pupil's status for the morning and afternoon sessions using the prescribed codes. The morning session starts at 9 am and its register closes at 9:20 am. The afternoon register is taken at the beginning of the afternoon session and closes at 1:45 pm. Staff use the same school-wide timing for each session. A pupil arriving after the session begins but before its register closes receives code L; after closure, code U or another more appropriate absence code is used. The arrival time is also recorded so staff know the pupil is safely on site. The office resolves missing marks immediately and does not leave an unexplained absence as a present mark.

A register amendment retains the original entry, amended entry, reason, date, and the name and role of the person changing it. Code N is temporary while the reason is unknown; the correct code is entered as soon as established, no later than five working days after the session. We record whether absence is authorised, the nature of approved off-site activity and the reason a pupil could not attend through an unavoidable cause. Every attendance-register entry is retained for six years from the date made. Codes follow the current national code table; staff do not reuse an old appendix if the prescribed codes change.

Attendance is recorded in the morning and again in the afternoon, not simply by arrival at some point in the day. Staff also report pupils who leave during a session and know who is on site. An off-site activity code is used only when the activity and supervision meet the relevant conditions and the school can confirm attendance; a timetable entry alone does not prove participation.

5 First-day absence and safeguarding

If a pupil expected in a session is absent without a known reason, the office checks the register and contacts a parent promptly on the first day. If unanswered, it tries other contacts and uses the pupil's known risk information to decide next steps with the DSL. Contacts, attempts, reasons, welfare checks and decisions are recorded. An unexplained absence continuing into later sessions or days prompts further contact; the school does not wait for a statutory return threshold to act.

The DSL assesses repeated, prolonged or unusual absence, including absence of a child with a social worker, looked-after child, pupil on a child protection plan or pupil at risk of exploitation or self-harm. Staff consider the child's voice, location and immediate safety and may contact the social worker, children's social care, police or other agency where appropriate. If immediate danger is suspected, staff call 999. KCSIE 2026 recognises repeated or prolonged absence as a possible warning sign of neglect, exploitation and other harm. Staff follow the safeguarding policy and record the rationale and action.

6 Reasons and leave of absence

Illness, including mental ill health, is recorded with code I where the pupil cannot attend because of sickness. The school does not demand a doctor's note routinely or assume that an anxiety-related difficulty is truancy. It may seek proportionate evidence when there is a genuine reason to clarify the absence, while agreeing support promptly. A notified medical or dental appointment uses code M for sessions missed; families are encouraged to arrange appointments outside school where practicable. Religious observance, suspensions, unavoidable causes, dual registration and approved off-site learning are coded under their specific conditions.

The Principal considers requests for leave individually, with reasons, relevant evidence, attendance context and the child's interests. A holiday for leisure is not ordinarily exceptional. Decisions and dates are confirmed and recorded. An absence cannot be authorised merely because a parent has requested it. The code chosen must match the legal conditions; a pupil in an approved educational activity is not simply marked present on site. Sixth Form or younger pupils not of compulsory school age may have sessions they are not required to attend, using code X only when the timetable and age criteria apply.

7 Attendance support and school-related distress

We look behind the attendance figure. The DSL coordinates a meeting where needed with the pupil, parents, Pastoral Lead, SENCO and relevant staff to understand barriers in school, at home, on transport or linked to health. We consider bullying, sensory needs, communication, separation anxiety, unmet SEND provision, safety and safeguarding. The pupil has a trusted route to express views, including non-verbal methods. The agreed plan names adjustments, the person responsible, contact and review dates, measures of progress, access to learning and a route to fuller participation. The school records how it checks the support works, including the child's experience.

For a pupil with an EHCP, the SENCO checks Section F delivery and discusses falling attendance or a proposed change of timetable with the placing local authority, requesting review where needed. The school works with health, social care or educational support services when appropriate. Persistent or severe absence is a prompt for early support and multi-agency work, not a reason to presume parental unwillingness. We keep a welfare link and meaningful learning available during lengthy absence, including when medical needs may require local authority involvement.

In very exceptional circumstances, a pupil of compulsory school age may have a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable in their best interests. It must not manage behaviour or amount to informal exclusion. The school and parent agree the sessions and a plan with a clear ambition, proposed end date, regular reviews and arrangements for education, welfare and return to full time. The pupil's views are considered; the social worker and placing authority are involved where relevant. Code C2 is used only for agreed sessions absent under this arrangement, not when the pupil is receiving education in another setting or is ill. Extensions require a recorded review. A phased return can be used as part of a carefully reviewed plan.

8 Statutory returns and missing education

The office, overseen by the Principal, makes the following returns to the local authority for pupils of compulsory school age, using the current regulatory requirements and local agreed method:

- Admission and deletion returns when a name is added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points.
- Attendance returns at the frequency agreed with the local authority, at least monthly, identifying pupils who do not attend regularly or have 10 continuous school days recorded with unauthorised absence codes G, N, O or U.
- A sickness return where code I absence is reasonably expected to reach 15 school days, continuously or cumulatively in the current school year. This is made when the threshold is anticipated, not delayed until the fifteenth day.

Returns do not replace same-day safeguarding action. The school retains evidence of submission, recipient and response, and follows up concerns with the local authority. It works jointly on reasonable enquiries about a pupil's whereabouts and does not remove the pupil from roll outside a lawful deletion ground. A pupil absent from SACGS but still on its roll continues to be registered and monitored. LA-funded or medically absent pupils are not silently removed or assumed to attend elsewhere.

9 Monitoring and review

The attendance lead reviews individual attendance and punctuality patterns weekly, including early changes. Half-termly, termly and annual analysis considers cohorts, codes, days, school-related barriers and the effect of support. Relevant information is shared lawfully with the DSL, SENCO, staff and local authority to support the child. A complaint is handled under the SACGS Complaints Policy.

The proprietor reviews this policy at least annually and sooner after guidance changes, a safeguarding incident, inspection finding, registration error or evidence that practice differs from policy. Related documents include the Safeguarding and Child Protection, SEND, Behaviour, Medical Needs, Data Protection, Complaints, and admission-register procedures. Staff are trained on coding, first-day response, safeguarding escalation and statutory returns.

References

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, paragraph 15; Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; Children Missing Education statutory guidance.