ST ALBANS
EDUCATION GROUP

Attendance

September 2026

A group of sector-leading Independent Schools

STAHS

PREP SENIOR SIXTH

PART OF

ST ALBANS EDUCATION GROUP

STAHS Policies

P09: ATTENDANCE

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1. This policy applies to St Albans High School for Girls ("the School" or "STAHS") which includes the Prep School and EYFS setting. This policy is reviewed and updated annually and is available on the School website.

1.2. STAHS believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

1.3. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

1.4. We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas - such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, and pastoral support can have on improving pupil attendance.

1.5. We are committed to:

1.5.1. Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.

1.5.2. Ensuring equality and fairness for all.

1.5.3. Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

1.5.4. Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.

1.5.5. Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.

1.5.6. Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.5.7. Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.

1.5.8. Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996.
- Equality Act 2010.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).
- DfE (2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance'.
- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'.
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026'.
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'.
- DfE (2026) 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers'.

2.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and related documents:

- STAHS P01: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- STAHS P01 RD: Child Missing in Education
- STAHS P02: Pupil Mental and Physical Health Policy
- STAHS P04: Pupil Behaviour Policy
- STAHS P06 RD: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- STAHS P11: Complaints Policy

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. The School defines the terms 'absence', 'authorised absence', 'unauthorised absence' 'persistent absenteeism' and 'severe absenteeism' as below.

3.2. Absence:

3.2.1. Arrival at School after the register has closed.

3.2.2. Not attending school for any reason.

3.3. Authorised Absence:

3.3.1. An absence for illness or injury for which the School has granted leave.

3.3.2. Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the School has granted leave.

3.3.3. Religious or other cultural observances for which the School has granted leave.

3.3.4. An absence due to a family emergency or other exceptional circumstances for which the School has granted leave.

3.4. Unauthorised Absence:

3.4.1. Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.

3.4.2. Truancy from timetabled School activities.

3.4.3. Absences which have not been properly explained.

3.4.4. Arrival at School after the register has closed without prior authorisation or good reason.

3.4.5. Absence due to shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays.

3.4.6. Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time.

3.4.7. Leaving School for no reason during the day.

3.5. Persistent Absenteeism:

3.5.1. Pupils are identified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

3.6. Severe Absenteeism:

3.6.1. Pupils are identified as a severe absentee if they miss 50% or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

3.7. Truancy:

3.7.1. Any intentional, unjustified, or unauthorized absence from education.

3.7.2. Truancy is a deliberate absence by a pupil and includes 'internal truancy' where a pupil is present in school but is not attending lessons or other timetabled activities and 'external truancy' where a pupil leaves the school site without permission or does not report to school.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. A Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) is a designated leader within the school who takes strategic responsibility for promoting excellent attendance and reducing persistent absence. They oversee attendance systems, analyse data trends, and work closely with staff, pupils, and families to identify and address barriers to regular school attendance. The role involves setting clear expectations, supporting early intervention, and ensuring that attendance remains a key priority across the STAHS school community. As STAHS Prep and Senior are split over two sites, there are two Senior Attendance Champions (SAC): one for the Prep School and one for the Senior School.

4.2. The STAHS Senior Designated Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) is the Deputy Head Pastoral & DSL.

4.3. The STAHS Prep Designated Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) the Deputy Head Pastoral and Deputy DSL.

4.4. The school's Attendance Manager is Nicola McGeown, who can be contacted via McGeownN@STAHS.org.uk staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance manager for queries or concerns about attendance.

4.5. The STAEG Governors have overall responsibility for:

4.5.1. Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the School.

4.5.2. Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

4.5.3. Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Schools Complaints Policy.

4.5.4. Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4.5.5. Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place, and that it is regularly reviewed and updated.

4.6. The Head of Prep and Senior are responsible for:

4.6.1. The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the School and distributing these to parents.

4.6.2. Appointing a member of staff to the attendance officer and attendance manager role.

4.6.3. Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

4.6.4. Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

4.7. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

4.7.1. Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too.

4.7.2. Ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

4.7.3. Modelling good attendance behaviour.

4.7.4. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

4.7.5. Where designated, maintaining accurate registers at specified times during the school day, updating registers to reflect changing pupil movements (for example, late arrival to a lesson) and alerting the Attendance Manager or otherwise specified member of staff to any unexpected absence from a session. STAHS considers the timely recording of all registrations a fundamental duty of all teaching staff.

4.7.6. Being alert to declining attendance from pupils and seeking support for the pupil from the relevant Pastoral staff

4.8. Parents are responsible for:

4.8.1. The attendance of their children during term-time.

4.8.2. Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

4.8.3. Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.

4.8.4. Updating the school if their details change.

4.8.5. Promoting good attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

4.8.6. Reporting any absence immediately via the online Parent Portal following the school absence reporting procedures (available below and in the Parent Handbook).

4.8.7. Ensuring medical, dental and other external appointments are made outside of school hours where possible.

4.9. Pupils are responsible for:

4.9.1. Being punctual for registration, lessons and all other timetabled activities.

4.9.2. Ensuring they are registered at the School Reception if they arrive at School outside of registration time

4.9.3. At Senior School, alerting teachers to upcoming planned absences in advance (for example, if missing part of a lesson for a sports fixture)

5. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

5.1. The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

5.2. At STAHS Senior School the attendance target is 97% and above. At STAHS Prep the attendance target is 98% and above.

5.3. Pupils will be expected to:

5.3.1. Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

5.3.2. Attend school and all lessons/activities punctually.

5.3.3. Attend every timetabled lesson and activity.

5.4. Pupils must be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at the start of the school day; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site at least 5 minutes prior to the start of their first timetabled lesson or activity. Pupils will have at least one break and one lunch period each day and are expected to have returned from break and lunch and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times. The school timetable, including the times of breaks and lunch, can be found on the school website.

5.5. The School recognises the importance of regular attendance from the earliest stages of education. In the EYFS (Reception), attendance is monitored as part of our commitment to promoting children's learning, development, welfare and safeguarding. Parents are expected to notify the School of any absence as soon as possible on the first day. Unexplained absences will be followed up promptly, and attendance concerns will be managed in partnership with families and, where appropriate, through the School's safeguarding procedures. Reception pupils are included within the School's attendance monitoring arrangements.

5.6. Note: The School will report to the local authority any unexplained absences of 10 or more days, either

consecutively or irregularly. The School will notify the local authority of absence due to illness where the school has reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of health needs.

6. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

6.1. Full procedures for registration and reporting absence for staff, pupils and parents are outlined in the Staff Handbook, Parent Handbook (Senior), Parent Handbook (Prep), and Student Handbook - all available online via the Parent Portal, staff dashboard and student dashboard.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

7.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details. Parents are responsible for updating the School if the details need to change. Parents must provide the School with more than one emergency contact number.

8. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

8.1. The school uses iSAMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. AM registration will open at 8.30am each morning and PM registration at 1.50pm every afternoon for both Senior and Prep School.

8.2. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend because of unavoidable cause.

8.3. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- /: Present in the morning
- \: Present in the afternoon
- L: Late arrival before the register has closed
- B: Off-site educational activity
- C: Leave of absence granted by the school
- C1: Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking employment abroad
- C2: Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- D: Dual registered at another educational establishment
- E: Suspended or permanently excluded
- G: Unauthorised holiday
- I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- J1: Attending interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
- K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- M: Medical or dental appointment
- N: Reason for absence not yet established
- O: Unauthorised absence
- P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- R: Religious observance
- S: Study leave
- T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- W: Attending work experience
- X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

8.4. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code'#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

8.5. Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

8.6. All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

8.7. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

9. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

9.1. Emails will be sent home, and members of the Pastoral Team may meet with pupils and their parents to address issues of persistent absence (when attendance at school falls to 90% or below, regardless of the reason). Persistent absence will be handled on an individual basis depending on the circumstances of the particular child or family.

9.2. In the event of persistent unauthorised absence, the Head may act to suspend, exclude or otherwise remove your child from the School if, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal is in the School's best interests and/or those of your child or other children. Please see the Parent Contract and the School's Behaviour Management Policy for further information on suspension, exclusion and required removal.

10. SEVERE ABSENCE

10.1. Members of the Pastoral Team will meet with pupils and their parents to address issues of severe absence (when attendance at school falls to 50% or below, regardless of the reason). The local authority (Herts County Council) will also be informed along with other appropriate services so that suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed. Severe absence will be handled on an individual basis depending on the circumstances of the particular child or family.

10.2. In the event of continued unauthorised absence, the Head may act to suspend, exclude or otherwise remove your child from the School if, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal is in the School's best interests and/or those of your child or other children. Please see the Parent Contract and the School's Behaviour Management Policy for further information on suspension, exclusion and required removal.

11. TRUANCY

11.1. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. At STAHS, all pupils are expected to be in their classes from the beginning of the school day through to the end of the school day.

11.2. Any pupil with permission to leave the School during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return. Signing in and out may be done through the School's InVentry system at the direction of reception staff.

11.3. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Head will be notified and they (or an appropriate member of staff delegated this responsibility) will contact the child's parents to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

11.4. In the first instance of truancy, in addition to any sanctions applied to the pupil in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

11.5. Further action may include a review by the Head of the child's position in the School, and could result in the suspension, exclusion or required removal of the child from the School.

12. MISSING CHILDREN

12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the School premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Head (or an appropriate member of staff with delegated authority to issue such permission). In the event of a pupil going missing during the school day, the School will initiate the Missing Pupil Procedures outlined in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and related documents.

13. TERM TIME LEAVE

13.1. The School's aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

13.2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

13.3. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions as outlined above in the Truancy section.

14. ABSENCE DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE CAUSE

14.1. When pupils are unable to attend because of unavoidable cause, the following codes will be used on the attendance register as applicable:

- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

- Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

15. REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

15.1. School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90%, these privileges may be taken away.

16. MONITORING AND REVIEW

16.1. Attendance and punctuality is monitored regularly by the Attendance Manager, Tutors, Form Teachers and/or Heads of Year in the Senior School. All unauthorised absences and instances of lateness are followed up on in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy and this policy.

16.2. The Deputy Head Pastoral or appropriate Senior School or Prep School Leadership Team member will review attendance and lateness by percentage for all pupils in the Senior and Prep Schools once per half term and will report concerns to the Head. In the event that a pupil's attendance falls below 90% in any one school year, the Head may, at their discretion, instruct the DSL or other appropriate member of staff to inform the local authority of the pupil's persistent absence.

16.3. This Policy will be reviewed annually in Trinity Term by the Head and Executive Team and will be ratified by the Education Committee of the Governing Body. In the event that a change to this policy is required between reviews, the review cycle will be altered to allow the change to be made and the policy ratified by governors.

16.4. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy and related documents	
Document title	Availability
P09: Attendance	Website
Register of Attendance, related live document	Not available

Policies and related documents as indicated are available request from info@stahs.org.uk
St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans AL1 3SJ. Tel: 01727 853 800

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.