

DE LA SALLE COLLEGE



ATTENDANCE POLICY

“UNTIL I COME, DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THE PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE, TO EXHORTATION, TO TEACHING”

1 TIMOTHY 4:13

Compiled by: The College Director	Last Reviewed: February 2025
Policy Holder: David Sharrock	Next Revision date: June 2026
Oversight Governor: Lisa Payn	Verification date: Lent Term 2024

Section 1

Rationale/Statement of Intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential.

De La Salle College is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavours to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our college so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because regular attenders:

- make better progress, both socially and academically;
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- find learning more satisfying;
- are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.

Section 2

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on the term dates and calendar events on the college website.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school and what their attendance and punctuality rate is. Attendance reports will be attached to interim and full written reports for pupils of compulsory school age.
- Celebrate good attendance through assemblies and House competitions.
- Set targets for the school and for individual students for attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

A member of the Senior Management Team (Mr David Sharrock) will oversee, direct and coordinate the College's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the Head teacher (Primary) or the Heads of House (Secondary) on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

Responsibilities of Students

- Attend every day, unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Go to all their lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the college office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents are required by law to ensure that all children of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 16) receive a full-time education, either by registering a child at a school or by arranging an alternative to school, in line with the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) policy.

These responsibilities extend beyond ensuring regular attendance and punctuality, it requires parents to make certain that each child arrives at school on time, dressed in line with the school's dress code, with the correct equipment and prepared for learning.

Parents can support their child/ren by:

- Informing the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the school any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, email or via online form on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable, and provide evidence of the reasons for absence when requested e.g., a medical appointment letter.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- **Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.**

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally, the register must be marked twice daily; once at the start of the school day and once in the afternoon. In the Primary school, this is completed at 08:45 for the morning session and 13:15 for the afternoon session. In the Secondary school, the morning register is completed at 08:45 and 13:40 for the afternoon session.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 08:45 and all pupils are expected to be in school sufficiently before this time as to allow the student to be fully prepared to learn. Morning registration is at 08:45 and it closes at 09:15.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the Education Welfare Service (EWS), should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with Education Department guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dental appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be referred to the EWS.

Parents or guardians of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate, is declined or punctuality does not improve following support, the College will refer the matter to the EWS.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either via telephone (754100), email (absence@dls-jersey.co.uk) or the website (www.dls-jersey.co.uk/absence/) and on any subsequent days of absence, providing a clear reason for the absence.

If your child is absent, we will:

- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;
- send a letter asking for verification of the reason for absence when none has been received. If a response to the letter is not forthcoming, parents will be invited in to the college to discuss the absence;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our pastoral leaders or Assistant Headteacher if absences persist;
- discuss the matter with the college's assigned Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the EWS if absence is unauthorised and/or falls below 90%;
- contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if we have not heard from you and we have concerns for your child's welfare.

Third day absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start Child Missing in Education procedures as set down by the States of Jersey Children Missing Education (CME) guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family and inform the EWO of your child's absence. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number.

Ten days' absence

If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer by either the College or the EWO, then MASH is notified that the child is missing education. Children's Services staff and/or the police will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Missing from Education

If a child is not in school and no reason has been given by the parent, the school should follow the Missing from Education policy.

Section 4

Request for leave of absence

De La Salle College has a discretionary power to grant leave for holidays in accordance with the policy of the Department for Education.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and must request permission in advance from the College Director via letter or email.

Parents must make a strong case to justify taking pupils out of school during term time as the absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. It is expected that parents will support their child's education by arranging family holidays to coincide with school holidays. Parents wishing to appeal against a decision should do so in writing. This appeal will be reviewed by a senior member of staff not connected with the original decision. If following the result of this appeal parents are still unhappy, the school complaints procedure should be followed.

The College Director will consider each request carefully, taking into account:

- the age of the child;
- the time of year;
- the nature and purpose of the trip – e.g., maintaining family ties and cultural links;
- the duration of the trip and the effect on the continuity of learning;
- the family circumstances; *
- the attendance pattern of the child;
- previous requests.

Where leave is approved by the college, the absence is considered authorised. If a child is away from the college longer than the approved period, the excess will be treated as unauthorised. Similarly, if permission is not requested in advance or a pupil is absent from the college when permission has been refused, the absence will be unauthorised.

Parents should be aware that if they remove a pupil from the college for a period of six weeks or more, that pupil may be removed from the school roll. In such cases, parents would be required to re-apply for that placement.

* If parents or guardians with 'parental responsibility' are separated, they should discuss the request beforehand. Both parents must send a request via letter or email to the college indicating their request or approval of it. Failure to do so will significantly delay a response from the college as it seeks the opinion of the other parent.

Section 5

Understanding Types of Absence – Authorised and Unauthorised

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence, and vice versa, if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell, but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 6

6.1 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his education.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher (Primary school) or Head of House (Secondary school), immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

6.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school other than when transferring between the junior school/secondary school parents are asked to:

- Give the college comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school address and contact information, and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing. De La Salle will inform you by letter when the pupil file has been transferred to the new educational establishment.
- Give one term's notice of the intention to leave, to be provided to the college bursar.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education.

6.3 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from the college for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the college to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, at the discretion of the College Director as to whether to authorise this absence. The College Director will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

6.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, at the discretion of the College Director to authorise this absence. The College Director will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the College Director. It is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

6.5 Study leave

Study leave should be used sparingly and only for pupils sitting public exams. Study leave should not normally exceed 15 days prior to the exam period starting. Parents will be informed of the date on which study leave will commence. Regard will be given to the individual pupil's ability to manage study leave and benefit from it.

Section 7

7.1 Pre-Reception

School attendance is non-statutory for Pre-Reception pupils. Pupils' hours of attendance vary for each individual, but are agreed in advance and between the parents/carers and the Head of Primary. Paper registration of pupils is undertaken by the parent/carer who signs the pupil in/out (staff member supervision). The register is submitted to the bursar on a regular basis.

Parents are requested to inform the College of any absence (see Section 3). If there is extended absence through illness, the College will inform the Education Department so that any adjustments to NEFF funding can be considered. Requests for holiday absence should be made to the Head of Primary (see Section 4). If this absence is in excess of 15 school days,

the College will inform the Education Department so that any adjustments to NEFF funding can be made.

7.2 Sixth Form

Sixth Form is a time for progression from statutory education to the independent world of work or further study at university. Sixth Form students are given greater freedom in order to manage their time completing their studies. The college should still be informed and approve absence in line with sections 3 and 4 of the policy above. However, Sixth Form students are only required to be present on site when they have scheduled lessons/tutor time.

In order to facilitate this, Sixth Form students must:

- Sign in each day before 10:35 when they come on to the college site using the InVentry system.
- Sign out each day whenever they leave the college site (including for consortium lessons) using the InVentry system.
- Sign back in before 13:40 using the InVentry system, if they have left the college site during the morning session e.g., if they have left the college site for lunchtime.

This procedure will enable Sixth Form students to receive appropriate roll call marks for the AM and PM sessions of each school day, so their attendance can be appropriately recorded.

When students do not have lessons for a PM session they will be placed in to a 'home study' class and receive the attribute 'B', to indicate they are educated off site. They are expected to use this time effectively to complete their studies.

Students studying at consortium for a PM session will be attributed 'D', or as advised by the consortium school.

Section 8

8.1 Collection of children from Primary school.

- The college should be notified of who will normally collect the child when the child joins the school.
- Parents have a responsibility to notify the school in advance if this changes, giving details of the person authorised to collect the child.
- Parents are also asked to inform the school where children are subject to court orders that limit contact with a named individual. In the event that anyone who is not authorised to do so attempts to collect the child, the school should not allow the child to leave and contact the parent immediately.

8.2 If a Primary pupil is not collected at the end of the school day.

- At the end of the school day, children are taken to their parents by their teacher (unless parents have pre-authorised the child to leave school unsupervised).

- If a parent does not show up, the child is taken to the Primary Secretary, who will check with the child to see if there are any changes to arrangements for collection and try to make contact with the parent or other family members, and wait with the child until someone comes to collect them.
- Children should not be released into the care of another parent, even where they offer to take the child home.
- The Primary Secretary will inform the Head of Primary if no contact can be made with the parent by 16:30. The Head of Primary should contact the Children and Families Hub Co-ordinator, who will arrange for a Child Care Officer to collect the child or make arrangements for the child to be transported to the Children's Services Department.
- Schools should regularly ask parents to confirm and update contact details and to nominate a family member or friend who can collect the child in the event that they are unable to do so. This will be done via the Parent Briefing.
- Where children are regularly not collected or collected late, this should be discussed with parents/carers early on and if no improvement is witnessed, then the Head of Primary should refer the case to the Education Welfare Service. If there are also child protection concerns, consideration should be given to making a Children and Families Hub referral and this should be discussed with the parent/carer.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.