



# St Ninian's High School Attendance Policy

## Aims and Purpose

Regular school attendance is essential for students to achieve their full potential. St Ninian's High School believes that consistent attendance is the key to enabling students to maximize their educational opportunities and become resilient, confident, and competent adults who can realize their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The school values all students and will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and seek to resolve any difficulties. This policy is an integral part of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, and the Ready to Learn Policy.

## General Principles

### Legal Duty and Definition of Parent

The Education Act 2001 and the Education (Registration of Pupils) Regulations 2004 clearly state that "it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." Both the School and the Department of Education, Sport & Culture (DESC) are required to enforce this duty.

For the purpose of this policy, "parent," as defined in the Education Act 2001, includes:

- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child.
- Any person with whom a child is living and who has the care of the child.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.



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## Registration and Attendance Targets

Students are expected to be registered twice a day for statutory attendance, in addition to during each lesson. The two main attendance registers take place:

- Morning Registration: At the start of Period 1.
- Afternoon Registration: Immediately after lunch at the start of Period 5.

Students are expected to maintain a minimum 98% attendance throughout the school year. Students whose attendance drops to or below 90% will be regarded as a persistent absentee.

## Attendance and Absence at St Ninian's High School

### Categorising Absence

When students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher or Head of Lower/Upper School and cannot be authorised by parents.
- All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation has been received and approved by the school.

### Reporting Absence

Parents must advise the school by telephone, website, or email by 8:30 am on the day of absence and provide an expected date of return.

- The dedicated email address for absences is: [snhsstudentabsences@sch.im](mailto:snhsstudentabsences@sch.im)
- For planned absences, parents must send an email to the office in advance to record the reason on the register.

### Exceptional Circumstances Leave



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Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head Teacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will therefore result in the absence being categorized as unauthorised.

## Categories of Absence

Category	Details	Authorisation Requirement
Illness	Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence (e.g., appointment card, prescription, or doctor's letter for longer periods) to allow the Head to authorize the absence.	Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher
Medical/Dental Appointments	Parents are advised to make appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Parents may be asked to show the appointment card.	Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher
Holiday	Request for authorisation of a leave of absence during term time to take holidays will NOT be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances which should be communicated to the Head Teacher who will make the decision regarding authorisation. Teachers are not expected to set work for students who go on holiday during term time.	Head Teacher
Other Authorised Circumstances	<b>Exceptional or emergency circumstances:</b> Cause for absence due to exceptional or emergency circumstances, e.g., serious family illness or bereavement. <b>Taking part in Representative Sporting, Musical or Performance Competition off island.</b> This will only be authorised if written confirmation is provided by the relevant Association Governing Body, coach or similar and the absence is specifically to compete at a higher level than what is possible on-island, or to take part in a formal qualifying event or for any essential travel required to compete at this level. The Head Teacher will take account of the overall record of attendance of the student, and their academic progress before giving any authorisation.	Head Teacher
Excluded	Formal suspension from school. This is counted as an authorised absence. The school will arrange for work to be sent home in line with the DESC Suspension Policy.	Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher

## Late Arrival to School

The compulsory school day begins at 8:45 am.



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- Students arriving after 8:45 am, but *before* the register has been completed and saved, will be marked as present but arriving Late (L).
- Students arriving to school after 8:50 am must immediately report to Reception and sign in to ensure their safety and accountability while in school.
- Persistent lateness to school and to individual lessons will be identified as a concern and followed up initially by the Pastoral Team.

## Roles and Responsibilities

St Ninian's High School believes that improved school attendance is a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students, and the wider school community.

### **The School Will:**

- Promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Regularly review the Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement it.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the DESC as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Have clear systems to report, record, and monitor the attendance of all students, including those educated off-site.
- Establish procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.

- Ensure data is used to devise solutions for poor attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.



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- Ensure a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance (e.g., good teaching and learning experiences).
- Ensure staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and able to address attendance issues.
- Develop a multi-agency response where appropriate to improve attendance and support students and their families.

## Parents Will Be Asked To:

- Talk to their child about school and education, and take a positive interest in their work and progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent, stating the reason and expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences and make appointments for doctors, dentists, etc., outside of school hours wherever possible.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact their child's attendance.
- Support the school, form a positive relationship, and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same positive messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home (e.g., bedtimes, independent study, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before).
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, only doing so where unavoidable and only in extreme circumstances.

## Subject Teachers Will:



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- Ensure the register is taken accurately and promptly at the start of each lesson.
- Mark a student arriving after the register as Late (L) and, where possible, add the number of minutes late.
- If a student has not arrived at a lesson but is believed to be in school, add a (zero weighted) lesson non-attendance demerit using ePraise to alert the pastoral team to a missing student.
- Report concerns around persistent lesson lateness to the Pastoral Team.

## Pastoral Support Attendance Lead will:

- Be responsible for **monitoring attendance and punctuality data** on a weekly basis.
- Discuss any attendance or punctuality concerns with the relevant Pastoral Leader or Progress Zone Team.
- Ensure that any concerns are communicated with the student and their **parents or guardians**.
- Implement appropriate supportive strategies and follow up actions including the delivery of the universal attendance intervention programme.
- Refer any persistent attendance or punctuality concerns to the Education Welfare Service where a child's attendance falls below 80%, detailing any supportive strategies and interventions that have already been implemented.

## Pastoral Leaders Will:

- Ensure that attendance and punctuality are regularly discussed in year team meetings.
- Recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance and punctuality with their year group and with individual students.



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- Ensure that they meet regularly with the Pastoral Support Attendance Lead to discuss concerns.
- Liaise with the Pastoral Support Attendance Lead to follow up on persistent attendance and punctuality concerns when there is evidence that previous interventions have not been successful.
- Continue to seek supportive strategies to raise attendance in these complex cases after discussion with parents/guardians, liaising with the Progress Zone and Education Welfare Team where appropriate.
- Exercise ‘professional curiosity’ around persistent absence/lateness and communicate with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

## Using Attendance Data

Students' attendance data will be monitored. Information may be shared with the DESC and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

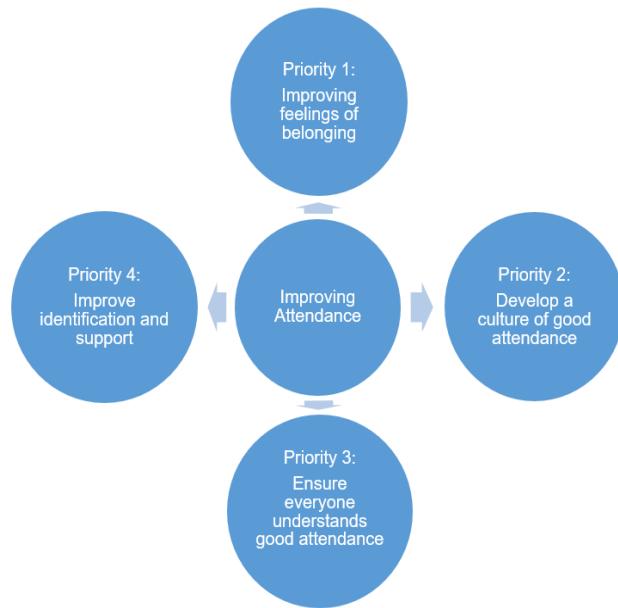
Print-outs of students' attendance records must not be supplied to anyone other than a Parent/Guardian or an authorised DESC officer without the approval of the DESC. Attendance data will be provided for Form Tutors and Pastoral Leaders as part of the routine tracking of students on a weekly basis.

## Support Systems

St Ninian's High School has developed a whole school attendance strategy which has identified the key priorities below:



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These priorities will drive and direct work across the school to help raise awareness of the links between attendance and attainment, improve the understanding of all stakeholders and ultimately to raise attendance and improve punctuality.

The school recognizes that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life (related to problems at home and/or in school). Parents should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance or behaviour (e.g., bereavement, divorce/separation, long-term illness). This will help the school identify any additional support required.

The school also recognizes that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance (e.g., students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children).

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance/punctuality report cards



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- Referrals to outside agencies
- Referral for Universal Intervention Programmes
- Student Voice activities
- PSHE curriculum time
- Reward systems
- Time-limited part-time timetables
- Additional support from the Progress Zone where appropriate
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, or when attendance falls below 80% despite support being offered, St Ninian's High School will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Team at the DESC.

## Policy Management

Detail	Current Information
Policy Issued	October 2019
Review Date	December 2026 (Previous reviews: October 2020, August 2023, August 2024, December 2025)
Person Responsible	Deputy Head Teacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead
Linked Policies	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Ready to Learn Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy