



St. Paul's School

MANIBUS POTENTIA STUDIUM ANIMIS

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY FOR ALL PUPILS

March 2015

Introduction

St Paul's School is a leading British School Overseas (the only one in South America) and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim to nurture an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason could lead to legal proceedings depending on the number of absences (dependent on the child's age).

Safeguarding: If your child does not attend school regularly, they may be at risk of harm. St Paul's believes that safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child requires that they attend school punctually and regularly. Hence, failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a child protection matter, which, if necessary, may be referred to the local *Conselho Tutelar*.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Our benchmark for attendance is 95%.

Understanding types of absence

Every session of absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required **as an email** using **absence@stpauls.br**.

Authorised absences are mornings/afternoons/days away from school for a valid reason like illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no *leave* has been given. This type of absence will be brought to the attention of the Director of Pastoral Care/Head of Pre Prep/Head of Prep and could lead to the implementation of sanctions in school and/or legal proceedings depending on the nature and number of absences. Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping trips or birthday events
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your 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 usually make things worse.

We strongly encourage parents to contact the Director of Pastoral Care (acf@stpauls.br) or the Head of Pre-Prep (ahb@stpauls.br) or the Prep (sa@stpauls.br) if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent absenteeism

A pupil becomes a *persistent absentee* when they miss **20%** or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Under current Brazilian legislation, a child over the age of 5 may be required to repeat the school year if they do not have 75% attendance in each of their academic subjects.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the 20% threshold or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic

mentoring where absence affects progress and attainment.

Absence Procedures

If your child is/will be absent you must:

- contact us as soon as possible by sending an email to absence@stpauls.br, in which you clearly explain the reason for your child's absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with your child's Head of Year if absences persist or if we have concerns; or
- refer the matter to the Director of Pastoral Care/Head of Pre Prep/Head of Prep if attendance moves below 95%, who, in turn, will contact you in writing to advise you that your child is failing to meet the school's attendance target, and is therefore a cause for concern.

Contact information

There are times when we need to contact parents about many things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers (home and work telephone numbers and correct email addresses) at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we do not, then something important may be missed. You can check if your contact information is up-to-date by accessing parents.stpauls.br. If you cannot access this site, please contact ck@stpauls.br.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss vital PSHE work/activities and school assemblies and do not spend time with their form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absenteeism and poor self-discipline.

How we manage lateness in the Pre-Prep

The Pre-Prep starts at 8.15 and punctuality is expected; classes will be open from 7.45 in the morning. School ends at 2.30 and pupils should be collected promptly unless they will be participating in after school activities. Parents ought to be aware that the morning greeting is focused on their children, ensuring their well-being throughout the day at school. The morning arrival can be a delicate moment for some children in the Pre-Prep school. Children are expected to follow an established routine independently and, if parents are in the classroom, this can be a distraction. In addition, not all the children have the opportunity to have the company of parents at this moment and they might feel at a disadvantage. Therefore, we discourage parents and other responsible parties from staying too long in the

classroom.

Children who arrive after 8.20 go to the Pre-Prep Secretary's desk to sign the Late Book. If they are with their parents or nanny they must say goodbye to them there. Then they must go to their classroom alone or with the Pre-Prep Secretary. If the child does not want to go alone or with the Pre-Prep Secretary the Teaching Assistant from that child's class may come and pick them up from the Pre-Prep Secretary's desk. The reason for this is that lessons start at 8.20 and arrivals after this time are disruptive for the class.

How we manage lates in the Prep School

The Prep School starts at 8.10 and pupils are allowed into the classrooms as from 7.30 when their class teacher and assistant are already there. Registration is called punctually in the classroom at 8.10. If pupils are not in class for registration then they are marked late.

The Prep gate is open from 7.45 to 8.10. If pupils arrive before 7.45, they enter via the main gate and wait in the covered area until 7.30 when they can go to their classrooms. Pupils arriving at school between 7.45 and 8.10 enter via the Prep gate at the front of the school building.

At 8.10, the Prep gate is closed and pupils who arrive late have to use the main gate. They should walk past the guard's hut, down the ramp and go to the Prep Secretary's office to sign the Late Book. After this they should go to their classroom.

How we manage lateness in the Senior School

The Senior School starts at 8.00 and we expect your child to be in their form room/assembly room by 7.55. Your child will receive a late mark if they have not passed the digital turnstiles by 8.00 (that is after the buzzer at 8.00). Pupils who are late will NOT be sanctioned for this if their parents/guardians have provided the school with written communication or an email to absence@stpauls.br advising of a **valid** reason for their child's lateness. Such correspondence/written communication should reach the school by 9.30am of the same day.

Pupils who arrive after 8.00 must attend a head of year sanction during the morning break of the same day on which they have arrived late. This sanction takes place in room 319 and runs from 9.35 until 9.45. Those pupils who have a written note from their parents/guardians accounting for their late arrival to school must go to the sanction to show their note to the Head of Year who is on duty. In this case, the pupil will not need to stay for the entire sanction. All late notes must be from a parent/guardian and must be for justifiable reasons e.g. an early doctor's appointment. Notes written by family employees and/or older siblings will not be accepted.

Pupils who forget to attend the morning head of year sanction will then be required to attend the lunch-time head of year sanction which takes place in room 319 from 12.25 until 12.45. Pupils will receive a personal reminder from a member of the pastoral team between 10.00 and 12.15 advising them that they must attend this sanction. Failing to attend the head of year lunch-time sanction will subsequently result in a 45-minute after school detention, which will need to be served on the first available Tuesday or Thursday afternoon. Pupils, their tutors and their heads of year will be automatically advised in writing in such instances by a senior school secretary.

If your child incurs 5 unjustifiable late marks in any half term period, they will be required to sit a 45-minute after school detention. Parents and pupils concerned will be automatically advised in writing by a senior school secretary.

If your child incurs 3 more unjustifiable late marks (totalling 8 unjustifiable late marks) in any half term period, they will then be required to attend a two-hour Saturday detention. Parents and pupils concerned will be advised automatically in writing by their head of year in such cases.

Incurring a subsequent 5 more unjustifiable late marks (totalling 13 unjustifiable late marks) will not only lead to an additional Saturday detention but both pupil and parents concerned will be required to meet with the Deputy Head in order to discuss the child's punctuality and strategies on how to improve it. The pupil will then have to register each morning for a period of 10 school days at 7.50 with the Deputy Head in his office. Failing to attend and comply with these sessions will mean that the school disciplinary policy will be applied.

All late marks will be re-set to zero at the start of each new half term.

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time or extending school holidays will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. We hope that you will respect and adhere to the term dates which are published on the school website. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. Only in exceptional cases, which have been authorised personally by the Head, will pupils be allowed to take exceptional leave during school time. In most cases, such absences are **unauthorised** and will be recorded as *Holiday* in the school register.

Conclusion

The school has a duty to make its absence figures (both authorised and unauthorised) available to parents and to promote excellent attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents

and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted. Every minute in school is important and we hope that you will support us in this.

The attendance target for every pupil at St. Paul's School is 95%.