

Attendance Policy and Procedures

St. John's C of E Primary School

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Due regard was taken by carrying out an EqlA to consider the impact on protected groups. However, the impact of the proposal was positive (or at least neutral) for all.	Tick required: ✓	Date: 10/09/24
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Part 1: Policy

1. Introduction

It is the aim of St. John's C of E Primary School that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise our vision to 'Together, Fly High Like an Eagle'. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

Our headteacher is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance: Mr Justin Hoyer, contact via email: office@stjohnsprimary.org.uk or phone: 01179030251. Day-to-day attendance issues should be raised with the office or class teacher.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning and prevent them, and others, from being the best person they can be; it may also indicate a safeguarding issue. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents/carers and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled; and acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child absent from school.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of EYFS children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance. We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace. Ultimately, we want every child to fulfil the school vision and be the best person they can be. We will always support families to achieve this and have summarised this policy to make it easy to read (See Appendix 2) and by following the approach below:

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

² A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

Support first approach	
Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”, therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents [‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015’](#), [‘Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools’- February 2023](#) and [‘Arranging Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs - December 2023’](#) – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents. In addition, we display reminders around the school and talk about the importance of being in school to learn in class and assemblies. We also have an attendance policy summary available in an easy access format.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff
- Work in partnership with parents

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Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance](#), from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

The DfE's guidance on the [school census](#) explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

We will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and adopting a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority in line with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.
- For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include:
 - the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data
 - any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part 2: What the Law Says and Our School Procedures

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, they are a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record the appropriate national attendance and absence code (see Appendix 1). The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported by the use of our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information.

3. Attending at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Deputy Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

At Lower Redland Road:

Our pupils must arrive by 9:00 am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 9:05 am and will be kept open until 9:30 am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:05 pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm

At Worrall Road:

Our pupils must arrive by 8:45 am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:15 am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:05 pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

A pupil who arrives late **after** the registers close will be marked as absent. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised. If the pupil is late for no good reason they will be marked with the **unauthorised** absence code 'Late after registers close' (U). See Appendix One for the detail [here](#).

Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss their welcoming start to the day as well as important events like the Morning Starter/Challenge, assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

4. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session such as an education visit, attending another approved education activity or sporting activity (see full list of codes in Appendix 1). Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. We will ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence and will record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site **that have been approved by the school in advance**, the register will be marked to show this is the case (code B). Our school's policy "[Externally Provided Educational Activities](#)" provides guidance about the types of external educational activities which may be approved.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

5. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupils absence is with permission granted by the school. Reasons for this include: attending a medical or dental appointment; being non-compulsory school age; an exceptional circumstance or participating in a regulated performance.

5.1 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

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Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

5.2 Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

5.3 Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent who is taking the child out of school (if parents are separated and share responsibility, we will make anyone with day-to-day parental responsibility aware) and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request online form which is available via the school website and on the weekly bulletin. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. The school will notify a parent via email within 7 days as to the outcome of the request. Appeals will only be heard if there are additional exceptional circumstances.

If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The HOPE Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the HOPE Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' and include: illness, religious observance or parent travelling for occupational purposes.

6.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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The school follows the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. (See DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance document - link in the Legislation and Guidance section, or at the end of this policy, or ask the school for a printed copy.) Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents should contact the school office via ParentMail before the school day starts on the day of absence. Where this is not possible parents should contact the relevant site by phone, leaving a message if necessary or send an email to the office (not the class teacher as they may not pick it up in time).

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (the Headteacher or a deputy) for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

6.2 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.3 Mobile pupils – parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

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To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.4 Suspensions (aka Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

7. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, we will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' for a range of reasons such as widespread travel disruption, school being closed or to follow public health guidance (see Appendix 1 for codes). Such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances.

8. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Parent(s) should still notify the school if they are planning on taking their child out of school. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.**

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Accompanying parents on a trip, business or otherwise (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing in advance by the school)
- Private tutoring during school hours (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing in advance by the school)
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

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Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices, or Prosecutions.

9. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, we will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

10. First Day of Absence Response

If a child is not present in school and we have not been informed of their absence, the school office will contact parents by phone (both) to establish the reason for absence. If this proved unsuccessful, we would contact parents via text and email. We will prioritise pupils who have a Child Protection Plan and those in Year 5&6 as they are more likely to walk to school without a parent.

It is therefore imperative that the school hold's contact details of at least THREE people we can contact in an emergency.

If the school has exhausted other possible sources of information, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may request a Welfare Check from the Police.

11. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

We recognise the importance of acknowledging good and improved attendance. We also understand that adults in the family are usually most influential in a child's attendance, will therefore share attendance information with families during parent/carer consultations. We will make contact with families where we have seen an improvement in attendance and acknowledge this via email or letter. Where a child is contributing to their own attendance, we will work with the family to incentivise and reward good and improved attendance.

12. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

The headteacher and two deputies meet at least termly to look at attendance and lateness data. This is broken down into different groups to help identify trends and patterns so that we can target our work to improve outcomes. Data also highlights those children who are persistently absent or regularly late so that bespoke specific work can be undertaken.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. Initially this is likely to be contact from the Class Teacher, this may be followed up with an email and where issues persist a meeting with the relevant deputy. We will aim to access or signpost wider support services to help remove barriers to attendance. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered to improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Deputy to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

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We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue, and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent, but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution, and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare> or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools

Schools and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are: • Parenting contracts • Education supervision orders • Attendance prosecution • Parenting orders • Fixed penalty notices

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14. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#), and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk

15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email or telephone to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code will be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

16. Reporting to Parents

All parents will receive a summary of their child's attendance in their end of year school report. Where a pupil's attendance or punctuality is of slight concern a printout will be provided at the parent/carer consultation evening. Class teachers will make contact with families who are at risk of becoming persistently absent in order to offer support so that this can be avoided. Where a child's attendance does drop below 90% or there are 5 or more 'lates' in a term, for whatever reason, our school will contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to. Where there are more significant concerns, school will invite parents in to discuss these.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

All attendance codes are recorded on our electronic database (currently SIMS, switching to Arbor from January 2025). Where the school has received information regarding an absence this will be recorded as a note next to the attendance code stating who called, when and the reason provided.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Summary figures are included in the Headteacher's Report and a detailed breakdown by groups provided as a standing item on the Teaching, Learning, Achievement and Wellbeing Committee. The governor responsible for attendance is the Safeguarding Governor.

The Headteacher & DSL

The Headteacher is the strategic lead for attendance and is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher meets with Deputies and the SENDCo twice a term to review attendance and determine the relevant strategy. In addition, in more serious cases, he will also determine when to meet with parents or refer to an external agency.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils, the authorisation of exceptional absence and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Deputy Headteachers

In conjunction with the Headteacher, the two deputies will ensure trends for groups and individuals are monitored and actions taken as appropriate. The deputy will offer more detailed support on attendance to families and staff.

Attendance Officers

Maxine Scarborough (administrator) is responsible for administering the fixed penalty process including issuing letters and ensuring procedural compliance.

Michelle Weaver (administrator) is responsible for monitoring and tracking attendance and lateness, including issuing letters to parents. She also provides Year to Date attendance to class teachers on a fortnightly basis as well as reports and statistics for the Headteacher and governors, both in summary for the school and for specific groups on a termly basis. This includes tracking actions taken by the school.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They are the first contact point for any day-to-day issues regarding attendance. They will review the current attendance for their class on a fortnightly basis and will be first to meet with parents to highlight attendance issues or risks.

Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls / messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They are also responsible for timely follow up contact with parents to explain absence.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Headteacher or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

20. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Guidance Documents:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE\)](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(DfE\)](#)

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school \(DfE\)](#)

[Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance \(DfE\)](#)

[Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs \(DfE\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education \(DfE\)](#)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures \(DfE\)](#)

[School census guidance and regulation](#)

[School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions \(DfE\)](#)

[Home to school travel and transport guidance \(DfE\) 2014\)](#)

[Children Missing Education Guidance \(Bristol City Council\)](#)

[Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct \(Bristol City Council\)](#)

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Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

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Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
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
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly 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
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2 – Easy Read – Attendance Policy Summary



Attendance Policy Summary

MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

ONE SHARED GOAL: OUR CHILDREN ARE **SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL** - WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY!

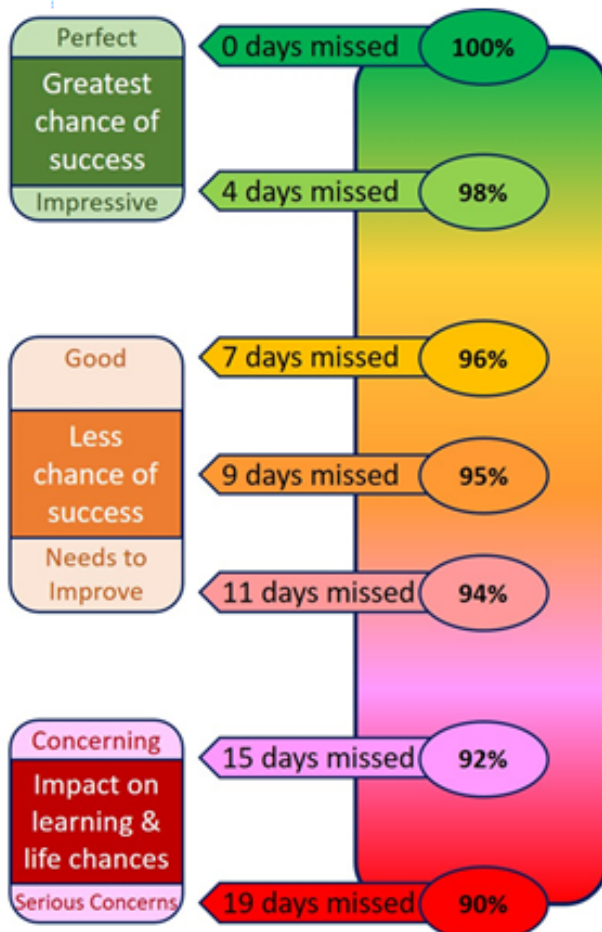
	Gates Open	Children can enter class	School day starts - Bell	Child is late & missing out
LRR	8:45	8:50	9:00	9:01
WR	8:30	8:45	8:45	8:46

YOU:

- ◆ Ensure your child is in school **REGULARLY, ON TIME & PREPARED**
- ◆ Let the office know via ParentMail (or phone/email) asap if your child is ill: *if they are up & about at home, they should be in school* (except diarrhoea & vomiting = 48 hours before returning)
- ◆ Bring your child to the office if your child is **late**
- ◆ Arrange holidays and trips outside school hours, including medical & other appointments where possible
- ◆ Request any unavoidable absence at least **4 weeks** in advance via the online form—the link is on the website and in the weekly bulletin

WE:

- ◆ Meet and greet your child with a **smile** have a learning activity ready immediately, record attendance on the register & **lock** the gate 5 minutes after the bell
- ◆ Record absence / lateness on the register with the right code & if we haven't heard from you we will **ring you** to make sure your child is safe & ask about the absence
- ◆ **Review** your request and let you know the outcome via email. Only exceptional / unavoidable absence are likely to be authorised. We cannot stop you taking your child out of school, but 10 half days or more unauthorised absence in a 10 week period may incur a fixed penalty (fine), especially for holidays.
- ◆ Track & **monitor** the attendance & lateness of all children
- ◆ Will tell you your child's attendance and punctuality **3x a year**.
- ◆ Will get in touch when we are **concerned** about your child's the attendance or lateness so we can support you to help them be in school.



Registers close **½ hour** after the bell - arriving after this time results in an **unauthorised absence**

An average of 90% attendance over 5 years = **half a year's schooling missed**

If We Are Concerned

- STEP 1:** Contact from the teacher to discuss the impact
STEP 2: Meet the teacher to explore further & offer help
 2 weeks of monitoring for improvement
STEP 3: Acknowledge improvement
 Or
STEP 3: Meet the deputy to discuss further support
 Agree an action plan
 (May be strategies, wellbeing support, asking to contact GP, access to services etc.)
STEP 4: If concerns persist, we **will** take formal action
 (May be a parenting contract, fixed penalty, Education Supervision Order or prosecution)

BE HERE, BE READY & your child can truly *Fly High*

Want to read the full policy? Scan QR here:

