



Attendance

St John's Catholic Primary School 2022/2023

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1 Introduction

At St John's we recognise that the best place for children to be educated is at school, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [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 the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Curriculum Committee will hold responsibility for monitoring attendance and reporting back to the full governing board. This is reflective of the impact that attendance has on pupil's attainment and achievement within school.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors in the Curriculum Committee meetings
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer- Office Manager

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with the Headteacher and parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Bromcom. In the first instance class teachers should raise concerns regarding attendance with parents and ascertain a full picture of any issues that are impacting on attendance. This conversation should be reported to the Headteacher and attendance officer.

3.5 Office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on Bromcom for teachers to see. They are also responsible for recording late arrivals after 8.45. This must be recorded on Bromcom and repeated lateness should be raised with the Class teacher in the first instance so a conversation with parents can be had in a timely fashion. If there is no improvement or minimal improvement then the Headteacher should be notified to meet with parents. It is recognised that persistent lateness can have a significant detrimental effect to students learning and mental health.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day at 8.45am promptly and once during the second session at 1.00. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school and be in class ready for the register at 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.50pm. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm. The school gates will open at 8.30 in the morning. Children will go straight to their classrooms and be ready for the register at 8.45. The school gates will be closed at 8.45 promptly. If a child arrives after this point they must report to the office and the lateness will be logged by the Office Manager. Mrs Farr or Mrs Clough will be on the gates to remind parents about the timings for the school day if they are late. It is recognised that it is not the child's fault for being late and they must not be blamed for being late. It is always the parent's responsibility to ensure children arrive at the correct time for school, this includes children that walk to school themselves.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

They can do this by calling the school phone number and pressing 1 to report an absence or by using the school SZapp under absence reporting, or emailing the school office-office@stjohnshorsham.school or by calling the school and speaking to a member of staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If a parent has received a fixed penalty notice or a warning letter (FPN) due to a pupil having had 10 unauthorised sessions within a 20 week period the absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised, At this point the school will be working with the family to improve attendance.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a child's absence falls below 90% (the Government define this as persistent absence) the school will not authorise any absence including illness until their attendance has significantly improved.

There will be exceptions made for pupils with validated medical issues or extenuating circumstances. We are committed to work with families to help them with their child's attendance. The school works closely with Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This will be noted and recorded on Bromcom.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

See 4.1 for more detail regarding timings and punctuality.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by making a phone call to the primary contact. If this call is not answered we will phone the second contact and third if necessary. If we are unable to speak to an adult and do not have a satisfactory reason for the absence we will leave a message on the answer phone if there is one and ask them to call the school as soon as possible. We will also send out a SZapp and email to the individual parents/ carers asking them to contact school. After 1 hour, if we still do not know where the child is a member of the SLT plus another member of staff will visit the home to ensure the child is safe. We will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If we have preexisting concerns around a child's absence we will action the above process sooner than one hour. For children are classified as 'at risk' or have an identified social worker we will also inform them of the absence. If the social worker is unavailable we will contact the MASH team.

The correct absence code will be recorded in Bromcom along with the notes from the event to ensure a record is being kept of events. This will help build a picture over time.

4.6 Reporting to parents

We will report on attendance annually to all parents giving them an individual attendance certificate which will show attendance, authorised and unauthorised absences. For parents/ carers where attendance has been highlighted as a concern we will notify them more regularly about their attendance figures and have a more detailed and ongoing dialogue with them to ensure the situation improves or to identify where further action is needed.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if she consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as significant religious event such a close family members wedding, Eid, an event that is highly out of the ordinary that requires attendance or the funeral of close family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Proof should be shown to the Headteacher.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Permission will not be granted for holidays. It is understood that holidays are expensive during school holiday times but they are not essential and missing school will have a detrimental impact on the child's learning. Exceptions will not be made for key workers. Although it is recognised that they cannot always pick holiday dates, holidays are not essential and missing school will have a detrimental effects on a child's learning.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

If a pupil has been identified as at risk of becoming a persistent absentee a warning letter will be issued by the attendance officer and signed by the Headteacher. This will explain the reason for the letter, the definitions of persistent absence and the consequences for the child. The next steps will be clearly outlined to ensure parents/carers understand the monitoring process and next steps should it be required. If attendance does not improve a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher to discuss barriers to attendance improvements. If attendance does not show significant improvement the parents/careers will be reported to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team and they can action next steps such as fines or issue court proceedings. At all points' school will be committed to work with families to improve the attendance of the child and maintain a child focused approach.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote attendance in the school newsletters. As a school we do not issue individual attendance awards as this discriminates against pupils with necessary regular medical appointments or pupils who become unwell and need to stay off school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. The Headteacher will report attendance to governors termly.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning before 8.30am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this and be assured that there is no Safeguarding concerns.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Pupil entitlement Service.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

School collects and stores data in Bromcom which is a cloud based secure service. We store data in accordance with GDPR regulations. We use the data collected in a number of ways:

Track the attendance of individual pupils

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Finula Farr and the governing board. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day