

St. James' C of E Primary School

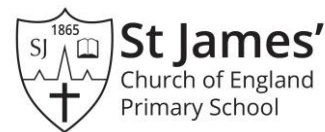
Attendance Policy

St James' C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

Written by: Lisa Harford

Written: September 2019



Inspiring and Growing for Fullness of Life

At St. James' C of E Primary School we regard attendance as a very high priority. The DfE (Department for Education) stipulates that children of primary school age should attend school full time and it is our aim to work closely with parents/carers, pupils and the (LA) Local Authority to ensure that we achieve this. In order for children to be inspired and grow for fullness of life it is imperative that they are given the opportunity to learn and develop and this means that they need to be at school every day. As a school we promote a nurturing and inclusive community – ensuring all are treated with dignity and respect.

St James' C of E Primary School provides the highest quality education within the context of caring Christian beliefs and practices; in partnership with St Philip and St James' Church. St James' is a creative, nurturing and inclusive community, shaped by our vision for spiritual growth and our Christian values. Children of any faith or none are given the opportunity to develop their own spirituality; valuing wisdom, growing in hope, showing respect and exploring big questions.

This attendance policy details the responsibilities of the school and parents with regard to promoting and ensuring excellent attendance, as well as outlining key procedures that should be adhered to. These policy and procedures are in line with government and local authority guidance. This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE advice on School Attendance – July 2019 and with our child protection, safeguarding, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Early Help Policies.

Parental Responsibilities

It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that their child:

- attends school regularly
- is punctual
- wears the correct school uniform
- has necessary equipment and kit

Parents should:

- Inform the school if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.

- Let the school know, by telephoning the school office before 10a.m. on the first day of absence from school, explaining why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Send a letter within one week of their child returning to school following an unauthorized absence to explain why their child was not in school if permission has not been sought already.
- Seek permission from school prior to any planned absence, i.e. other than illness.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School Responsibilities

School will:

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of pupils.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences, i.e. school will contact parents on the first day of absence if an explanation for a child's absence has not been received and any pattern in persistent lateness.
- Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Be available to discuss attendance/lateness concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data and share regularly with the Attendance Governor and school staff
- notify the relevant social worker if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who has a Child protection Plan (previously known as being on the child protection register)ⁱ

Governors will:

- Meet regularly with the Headteacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Champion from the governing body to oversee attendance policy, procedures and data and report back to the governing body.

School Times

We expect pupils to be at school/in the classroom by 8.35am in time for the start of morning registration. (8:35-8:50am)

Lunchtime is between 11.45pm/12.00-1.00pm (infants) and 12:30pm – 1:30 pm (juniors)

School finishes at 3.00pm

Registration

Schools must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon and every pupil will be marked as present, absent, unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown by the use of nationally approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Registration will take place between 8.35 am and 8.50 am for the morning session and between 1.00 pm and 1.15pm (EY/KS1) 1:30 and 1:45 pm (KS2) for the afternoon.

- Pupils arriving **during** the registration period, i.e. after 8.50am will be marked late (L).
- Pupils arriving **after** the registration period is over will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark.

The marking of registers will be in accordance with current DCFS (Department for Children, Schools and Families 2007-2010) guidelines.

Guidelines for staff for completing the register can be found in **appendix 1**

Legally, absence has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the LA and DfE. Only the head teacher can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

What is an Authorised Absence?

This is when a pupil:

- is absent with the prior permission of the school;
- is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment;
- is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance;
- has suffered a family bereavement;
- has been excluded;

What is an Unauthorised Absence?

This is when a pupil:

- is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered;
- arrives after registration period has closed with an acceptable reason;
- is away from school on a family holiday for a period not previously agreed with the Headteacher.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

Holidays in Term Time

Time off for family holidays in term time is **not a right**. Schools have the **discretion** to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family holiday if it is felt it is warranted, i.e. only in exceptional circumstances. Very occasionally the school will consider granting permission for extended leave, i.e. more than 10 days in one school year. However, permission for extended leave will only be given in extenuating circumstances. Such requests would need to be discussed with the Headteacher.

In line with Government and Local Authority guidance, governors and staff at St James' strongly believe that, unless there are very special reasons, annual family holidays should not be taken in term time. This is in line with government guidance 2013.

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of desired accommodation
- occasional days out
- overlaps with the beginning or end of terms/long weekends
- birthday or anniversary
- visiting relatives or relatives visiting

If parents/carers wish to apply for permission to take their child on holiday during term time, they must do so in writing, using a holiday request form at least two weeks before the date of the holiday. This request must be sent to the Head teacher.

Each request for holidays will be assessed on an individual basis and consideration will be given to the pupils' age and general attendance record.

The Head teacher will only be able to grant permission in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school (DCSF: education Regulations 1981).

Permission will **not** be given for holidays over exam times (May) or the first two weeks of the new school year and no more than 10 school days will be allowed unless the circumstances are truly exceptional.

If parents choose to take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised by the school they will receive a written warning that legal action may be taken.

If parents take their child on holiday without the absence being authorised for a second time, the school will request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty notice which could result in the parents incurring a fine of up to £100 per child.

Appointments

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified.

When pupils need to leave school mid-session for an appointment parents should, for safety reasons, come to the office at the time of collection to sign their child out. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on their return to school.

Frequent Absences for Medical Reasons

When a pupil **frequently** misses school for medical reasons the school medical service will be consulted. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made.

Longer Absences

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time, will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work. A phased reintegration will be managed between school and the parents on an individual

basis and support given as appropriate. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance of all pupils will be closely monitored by the school attendance officer/Headteacher

- After close of registration, registers will be returned to the office and checked.
- Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 10 am a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. (Parents/carers must follow up with a written note on their child's return to school).
- All telephone messages regarding attendance will be dated and recorded in an absence diary which is kept in the school office.
- If the school have been unable to make contact by telephone, a written communication will be sent on the 2nd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is no response a reminder will be sent on the 7th day of absence and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The Educational Welfare Officer will also be informed at this stage.
- Where the register shows 10 separate 'late after registration' marks over a thirteen week period the school may consider issuing a warning or a fixed penalty notice.
- Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to (the Headteacher) who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence, the matter could result in a fine.

The Law

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfill their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers.
- Schools must report to the LA on (most) pupil absences that are not authorised. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice Code of Practice allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions)

of unauthorised absence in a thirteen week period particularly when this absence is on account of:

- (a) Lateness after registration
- (b) Term time holidays without permission
- (c) Avoidable absence e.g. visiting relatives, birthday treats, tiredness after a late night etc.

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £50 after only one warning.

Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

Strategies

To support our attendance policy we:

- will treat attendance as a priority;
- promote good attendance at every opportunity: at Parents' evenings; at induction ; in newsletters; in assemblies; on notice boards, etc.
- always use first day telephone contact;
- reward and celebrate good and improved attendance;
- set attendance targets for the school
- keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level and its impact on their education –see appendix 2
- make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;
- notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels;
- provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for pupils where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important.
- Support parents where attendance/lateness is an issue – see Appendix 1

Success Criteria

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, EWS, etc.
- Staff, pupils, parents are clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

Additional Reading

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Acceptable Use, Anti bullying and hate, Attendance, Behaviour, Child protection/safeguarding, Complaints, Confidentiality, E-safety, Health and Safety, Offers of Early Help, RHSE (relationships, health and sex education), Safer recruitment and induction, SEND, Staff code of conduct/Staff handbook, and Whistleblowing.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401467/parental_responsibility_measures_for_school_attendance_and_behaviour.pdf.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

Appendix 1

Register Codes

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made.

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised. Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. Administrative Codes The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Code B: Educated off site (NOT dual registration)

When a child or group of children attend activities other than school trip e.g. exams or workshops this code can be used.

Code P: Approved sporting activity

When a child plays sport at another school or off site this code can be used.

Code V: Education Visit or Trip

This code will be used when pupils visit school open days or go on other educational visits or trips

Headteacher - Mrs Lisa Harford
(Attendance Officer)

Attendance Administrator – tbc

Attendance Administrator – Dee Rees

Appendix 2

Procedures for Promoting Attendance

Teacher/Attendance Administrator to monitor
punctuality and attendance daily



Teacher/Attendance Administrator to monitor
if attendance drops to 93%



Teacher monitors attendance for 2-3 weeks and speak with parents if appropriate.

If attendance continues to drop, teacher to alert Headteacher



Headteacher will send letter or contact the parents alerting them to the school's concern.



If no improvement Headteacher to invite
parents/carers into school for a formal meeting



If attendance drops to 87% Headteacher to monitor attendance formally



Headteacher to send a letter to parents/carers informing them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 3 weeks



If no improvement then Attendance Officer/Headteacher will complete a home visit if parent/s carer/s fails to engage or if this is the second referral within a two month period it may go straight to a Warning Letter and an **Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)**

Attendance Improvement Meeting

An Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) is set up to allow parents/carers and students an opportunity to show an improvement in their attendance percentage over a set number of weeks.

Initial meeting set up with Headteacher

During the meeting a target is set for the student's attendance and the number of weeks it will be monitored over (usually 4 – 6 weeks)



Review meeting



Possible extension if close to target



Second review meeting



Targets met case closed

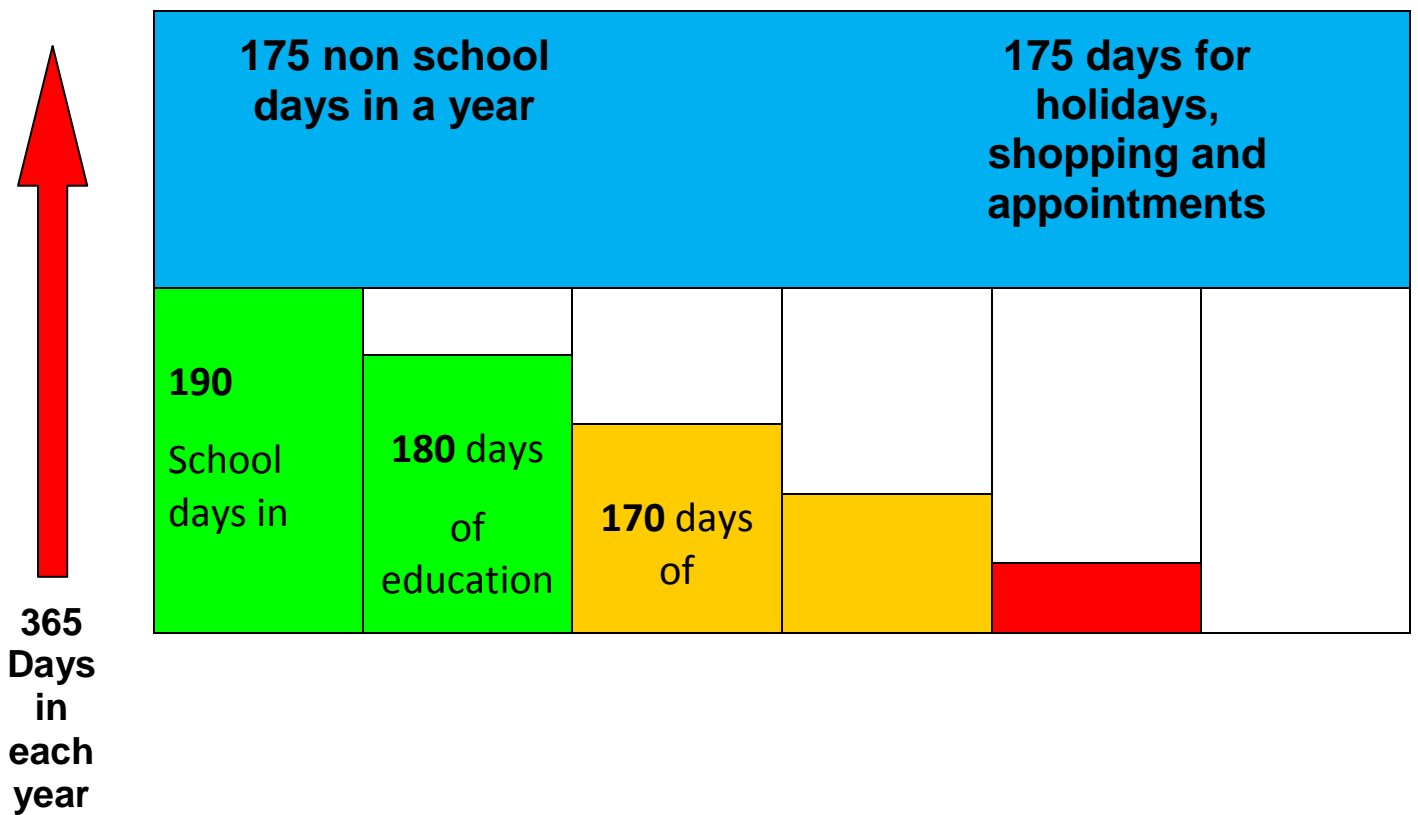


Targets not met plan **Failed**



Case referred to the Education Entitlement & Inclusion Team who will see the legal process through to Pre court meeting, to determine how to proceed and dispose of the offence

Appendix 3 Resources to highlight days missed in education that may be used in school



Each year 190 days for your education		education	161 days of education	152 days of education	143 days of education
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
Excellent/GOOD		ROOM TO IMPROVE		SERIOUS CONCERN	
Best chance of success. Off to a flying start		Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress		Possible Court action	

Why were you absent?

It was my birthday

Had to get my hair cut

Had to look after my little sister

Couldn't get up, I had a late night

Had to take the dog to the vets

Went Shopping

Had to wait for the

Alarm didn't go off



These absences would **NOT** be authorised

Good time keeping means...

...making sure your child is at school and ready to learn, before the school bell rings!

Did you know? - being 15 minutes **late** each day is the same as missing **two weeks** of school!*



**Lost minutes =
Lost learning!**

3
days
lost

5
minutes
late

6.5
days
lost

10
minutes
late

10
days
lost

15
minutes
late

13
days
lost

20
minutes
late

19
days
lost

30
minutes
late

Every Schoolday Counts

but every **minute** is equally important!

* Over one full academic year