



St Jude's Church of England Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

*Our children
Our St Jude's Family
Happy – Inspired – Loved
The sky is not the limit
Ready for today - prepared for tomorrow*

Aims

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.

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
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The administrative lead:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance/ issues with the headteacher

3.4 The Education Welfare officer:

- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices and attends attendance panel meetings when necessary.

3.5 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.

3.6 School administrative staff and the school business manager

School administrative staff including the school business manager are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the SIMS school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school will follow the most up to date government guidance during COVID 19 to ensure the safety of all children and staff. [School guidance on attendance during COVID 19](#)

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 and once during the second session. 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 – including COVID codes.

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

Pupils must arrive in school no later than 8.55am on each school day in their respective line, or at their staggered start time during COVID 19.

The register for the first session will be taken at **9.00am** (or 5 minutes after the start time during COVID) and will be kept open until **9.10am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.30pm**.

Children arriving when the register has closed 10 minutes after the opening time will be marked in as late.

Children must report to the reception desk in the school office with their parent to explain why they are late.

Children who are not in school from 10.00am are reported as absent.

Staggered start times and pick up times are in place, following COVID 19 guidelines.

Please see appendix 2 daily timetable.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8.45am** or as soon as practically possible. They must phone the school stating clearly the reason for the absence. The school will not authorise absence if the parent has not contacted the school to give a reason.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will 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.

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.

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.

Parents should supply an appointment card or confirmation text of the appointment.

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.

When pupils are regularly out of school for unexplained sickness which leads to regular absence, the school will seek the support and advice of the school nurse, and a meeting will be arranged with the parent and child to plan the best way to support the child and family.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives when the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

If a pupil is not in school after 10.00am they will be reported as absent.

If a pupil arrives after the school register is closed, then they are reported as late and missing minutes are recorded to their attendance record.

If a child is late more than 3 times in a 2 week period, the school will issue a letter to the parent reminding them of the importance for punctuality in school, and the impact on missing learning time. If there is no improvement, the parent will be invited to meet with the headteacher.

Supportive measures will always be explored with the parent, for example:

- ✓ Support with planning the best route to school
- ✓ Support with planning the start of the day in the family home, including issuing an alarm clock
- ✓ Explore alternative options for another family member to drop the pupil off
- ✓ Explore the options of a family nearby picking up to form a 'walking bus'
- ✓ Discuss the options of attending the breakfast club

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 telephone calls to the parent. These reasons will be recorded into SIMS.
- Write a letter to the parent notifying them that if attendance does not improve they will be invited to an attendance panel meeting, if the absence continues over period of time and drops below 90% in half a term.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary and follow the children missing in education guidance.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports on the pupil attendance as part of the end of year report.

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 they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

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 **unauthorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Attendance of funeral / service due family bereavement
- Year 5 and year 6 children visiting secondary schools

Valid reasons for **unauthorised absence** includes:

- The parent not calling the school to provide a reason for absence
- A pupil being absent without the required documentation

- A parent knowingly booking a holiday to a destination that requires isolation on return, resulting in the child missing 10 days of school
- A parent booking a holiday during term time.

Under exceptional circumstances and with supported medical/SEND documentation it may be necessary for a pupil to have a planned transition program. This will be discussed with the headteacher and SENDCO.

Appendix 3 - Please see the leave of absence form

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Absence is carefully monitored; phone calls are made by the admin team if children are not reported as absent.

The headteacher issues letters and attendance reports to parents of children whose absence drops to below 90%. Letters will also be issued in cases where the child has unexplained absence for 2 days or more. The absence will then be monitored.

The EWO will be informed if the absence persists and an attendance panel may be called. These are arranged to put supportive measures in place to ensure that attendance improves.

The headteacher may complete a MARF to Lambeth Social Care to report safeguarding concerns over absence if she feels that this is necessary.

Where reasons for regular sickness are reported - the school will seek advice from the nursing team and arrange meeting with the parents.

COVID 19

If a child must isolate due to travel to a country that requires quarantine this will be marked as unauthorised absence.

The relevant codes will be used for children who must isolate or who are shielding.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or 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

The school will celebrate excellent attendance in the weekly newsletter and through the weekly stars awards.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Headteacher and PAC committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Pupil and Well Being Policy

Policy History

Date Reviewed by governors	16 th March 2021
Next Review	March 2022

This policy has been agreed by the PAC committee of St Jude's School on **16th March 2021**

Chair of Governors: Mrs Geraldine O'Brien

Signed: *Geraldine O'Brien*

Date: 16th March 2021

Appendix 1 COVID 19 staggered starts and pick up times

Registers close 10 minutes after start time.

A child that arrives after the register is closed is marked as late.

Daily timetable for all year groups – March 2021

	8.45 – 10.15	10.15 – 10.30	10.30 - 12	12 - 12.45	12.45 – 3pm	3pm
Rec	Learning time	Playtime	Learning time	Lunchtime	Learning time	Hometime

	8.45 – 10.15	10.15 – 10.30	10.30 - 12	12 - 12.45	12.45 – 3pm	3pm
Yr 1	Learning time	Playtime	Learning time	Lunchtime	Learning time	Hometime

	9 – 10.30	10.30 – 10.45	10.45 – 12.15	12.15 - 1	1 – 3.15pm	3.15pm
Yr 2/3	Learning time	Playtime	Learning time	Lunchtime	Learning time	Hometime

	9.15 – 10.45	10.45 – 11	11 – 12.30	12.30 – 1.15	1.15 – 3.30pm	3.30pm
Yr 4/5	Learning time	Playtime	Learning time	Lunchtime	Learning time	Hometime
	9.30 – 11	11 – 11.15	11.15 – 12.45	12.45 – 1.30	1.30 – 3.45pm	3.45pm
Yr 6	Learning time	Playtime	Learning time	Lunchtime	Learning time	Hometime

Appendix 2: Attendance codes including COVID codes for isolation and shielding

Codes

Code	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age or COVID-19 related
-	All should attend / No mark recorded
7	Illness due to Covid 19
8	Self-isolating due to Covid 19
9	Shielding due to Covid 19

St Jude’s Church of England Primary School
Request for Pupil Absence during term time.

Guidance for Parents

The Department for Education (DfE) permits the Headteacher to authorise up to **10 days planned absence** in **exceptional** circumstances such as a child’s illness, bereavement and religious festivals, in any school year. However, this is at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not an automatic right.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure children attend school regularly. Absence without permission is marked as unauthorised. Failure to comply with government legislation can lead to:

- the issue of a Penalty Notice by the Courts Manager to each parent/carer
- the issue of a summons by the Courts Manager against each parent/carer
- the removal of the pupil from the school register.

Date of Request	Name of Pupil		Class	
Absence From (date)	Return date to school	Number of school days absent		

Please state the reason for absence

(please support this statement with relevant documentation including invitations, certificates, medical information)

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Please print and sign your name (parent/guardian making the request)

Date

For Office Use Only

Summary of absence (To be completed by the attendance officer)	Previous academic year number of days absent		Current academic year - number of days absent (to date)	
	Authorised %:		Authorised %:	
	Unauthorised %:		Unauthorised %:	

Headteacher's Decision:

This absence is authorised

This absence is

Signed.....

Date

This form will be photocopied and returned to parents with the headteacher's decision.