



St Jude's Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2022

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

1. AIMS

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and punctuality
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance and punctuality across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance and punctuality improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and punctuality identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality is Claire Douch and can be contacted via 020 7274 2883.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance and punctuality data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance and punctuality data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance and punctuality reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Claire Douch and can be contacted via 020 7274 2883.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, by marking who is present in each session, and submitting this information to the school office (morning and afternoon).

3.6 School Admin and Office staff

School admin and office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (SIMs)
- Pass information from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance and punctuality.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

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 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

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

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

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.

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 (at least 24 hours before)

Parents must fill in a Leave of Absence Form as soon as practically possible. Leave of Absence Forms can be obtained from the school office.

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

The Admin and Office staff will keep a record of children marked as late each day. These records are sent to the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis and the appropriate action taken.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will conduct a home visit and make contact the police if deemed necessary (if the home visit does not result in contact with the parent or carer)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels (termly).

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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
- 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

5.2 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

- Regular communication with parents and carers and support given where necessary.
- Pupil Progress Meetings involve discussion with teaching staff to support attendance.
- Staff encouraged to report concerns regarding attendance and punctuality as soon as possible.

7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance, absence and punctuality data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and punctuality, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance, absence and punctuality, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

In order to avoid this, the school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Follow the actions in the **Attendance Flowchart** below:

STAGE 1

- The first time a child's attendance falls below 95% in a half term, this is identified as the **YELLOW STAGE**.
- The child's parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer via letter (see appendix 2). This letter aims to alert parents that their child's attendance has fallen below the expectation for the school.
- The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the child's attendance closely.

STAGE 2

- The first time a child's attendance falls below 94% in a half term, this is identified as the **AMBER STAGE**.
- The child's parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer via letter (see appendix 3) and a meeting arranged to discuss their child's attendance.
- Within the meeting, the Attendance Officer will formulate an Attendance Action Plan (see appendix 5), in agreement with the parents, to support the family and improve the child's attendance. During the meeting, an Attendance Review will also be scheduled.
- The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the child's attendance closely over a 4 week period and keep in contact with the family if necessary.
- All information regarding STAGE 2 will be recorded on CPOMs by the Attendance Officer and shared with the Headteacher (DSL).
- The Attendance Officer will meet with the parents in an Attendance Review to discuss the child's attendance. This meeting will ascertain if the necessary improvements have been made.

STAGE 3

- The first time a child's attendance falls below 92% in a half term, this is identified as the **RED STAGE**.

- The child's parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer via letter (see appendix 4) and a meeting arranged to discuss their child's attendance.
- Within the meeting, the Attendance Officer will formulate an Attendance Action Plan (see appendix 5), in agreement with the parents, to support the family and improve the child's attendance. If the child already has an Attendance Action Plan, this will be reviewed and a new one created. During the meeting, an Attendance Review will also be scheduled.
- The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the child's attendance closely and keep in contact with the family if necessary. If no significant improvement in the child's attendance is made, the school will consider Local Authority involvement.
- All information regarding STAGE 3 will be recorded on CPOMs by the Attendance Officer and shared with the Headteacher (DSL).

A child's personal circumstances will be taken into account at each stage of the **Attendance Flowchart**.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. 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

Policy History

This policy has been agreed by the governing body of St Jude's School on 10th October 2022 and will be reviewed annually.

Chair of Governors: Mrs Geraldine O'Brien

Signed:

Date:

Signed copy in school

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. This may change in line with updates to the DfE guidance.

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

Appendix 2: Below 95% Attendance Letter

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear [insert parent's name],

I'm writing to inform you that [insert child's name] attendance at school is currently [insert %] as of [insert date].

Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [insert child's name] academic achievement.

We do acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and illnesses can occur. We know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for children's success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [insert child's name] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 020 7274 2883 as soon as you can if you need any support with this.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dunford-Crozier
Headteacher

Appendix 3: Below 94% Attendance Letter

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear [insert parent's name],

I'm writing to inform you that [insert child's name] attendance at school is currently [insert %].

Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [insert child's name] academic achievement. As your child's attendance has fallen below 94%, this is the Amber Stage of our Attendance Policy.

I would like to invite you to a meeting on [insert date] at [insert time]. At this meeting we can draw up a short Action Plan and set a date for an Attendance Review.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and that illnesses do occur. We know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for children's success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [insert child's name] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 020 7274 2883 as soon as you can if you need any support with this.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dunford-Crozier
Headteacher

Appendix 4: Below 92% Attendance Letter

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear [insert parent's name],

I'm writing to inform you that [insert child's name] attendance at school is currently [insert %].

Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [insert child's name] academic achievement. As your child's attendance has fallen below 92%, this is the Red Stage of our Attendance Policy. I would like to invite you to a meeting on [insert date] at [insert time]. At this meeting we can draw up a short Action Plan and set a date for an Attendance Review.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [insert child's name] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on 020 7274 2883 as soon as you can if you need any support with this.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dunford-Crozier
Headteacher

Appendix 5: Attendance Action Plan

Attendance Action Plan

Name of child	
Current Attendance	
Actions to improve attendance	
Review date	
Attendance at Review (from September)	
Attendance since Review	