



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*

INTRODUCTION

St Jude's recognises that regular school attendance is central to raising standards in education and improving the life chances of all children. Regular attendance at school enables children to gain maximum benefit from a range of educational and wider opportunities available to them.

This policy sets out the framework for how parents, carers, staff and governors as well as partner services can work together to help all children within St Jude's to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. St Jude's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment. Our attendance policy must be adhered to, to ensure the safety of all children who are on the roll of St Jude's. Ensuring your child regularly attends school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Children are expected to attend school for 190 days each academic year. Lessons are planned in sequences that often build cumulatively. If children miss part of a sequence, it can be like trying to complete a jigsaw puzzle without all the pieces.

The following tables illustrate a child's attendance and punctuality over a school year and the equivalent days/weeks of learning missed as a result:

Attendance during one school year:	Approximate number of lessons lost:	Approximate days of absence/learning lost:	Approximate school weeks of absence/learning lost:
100%	0 lessons	0 days	0 weeks
97%	25 lessons	5 days	1 week
95%	50 lessons	10 days	2 weeks
90%	100 lessons	20 days	4 weeks
85%	150 lessons	30 days	6 weeks
80%	200 lessons	40 days	8 weeks

Punctuality during one school year:	Approximate number of lessons lost:	Approximate days of absence/learning lost:	Approximate school weeks of absence/learning lost:
Arriving at 8.50am every day:	0 lessons	0 days of learning lost in a year	0 weeks
Arriving 5 minutes late every day:	15 lessons lost	3 days of learning lost in a year	0 weeks
Arriving 15 minutes late every day:	45 lessons lost	9 days of learning lost in a year	2 weeks
Arriving 30 minutes late every day:	90 lessons lost	18 days of learning lost in a year	4 weeks

AIMS

- To achieve an attendance target of 97%
- Support our pupils and their parents/carers in the establishing, promoting and maintaining the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- For all children and families to value attendance and punctuality highly
- Ensure that all our pupils have full and equal access to have the whole curriculum over those 190 days with the aim of raising children's achievement and levels of attainment
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities for their child's attendance at school
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure that our attendance meets Government and Local Authority guidelines and targets.
- Act early to address patterns of absence and punctuality

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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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 Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head of School

The Head of School 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

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 the Head of School, Claire Reid, and can be contacted via 020 7274 2883.

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 the Head of School, Claire Reid, and can be contacted via 020 7274 2883.

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).

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.

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

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

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 (9am) and once during the second session (1.30pm). 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, ready for registration.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm.

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 understand and appreciate that if someone is unwell, it is right that they stay at home to rest and recover as quickly as possible. If you need advice about whether your child can attend school whilst they are experiencing symptoms of an illness, the NHS have published some helpful advice around common childhood illnesses and attendance at school: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

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.

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. Proof of appointments will be requested and these should be attached when submitting the Leave of Absence Form.

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.

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 and request information from the parent/carer of each child to confirm why the child was late. This information will also be recorded for the Attendance Officer to access and review regularly.

Following up unexplained absence

When 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 with 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 and/or [Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board](#).

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels (termly) when and if there is a concern.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. In order to classify the absence as authorised, the cause of the absence is required from the parent/carer.

Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an understandable reason, such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable causes. The school may ask for evidence for any of these, in order to authorise them.

Approval for other term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School'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 (10 school days) before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the

school office. The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may 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
- 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

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.

Cost of a Penalty Notice

Fines are issued by the council on behalf of schools and for the 2024-25 academic year, these are:

- £80 per parent, per child, if payment is made within 21 days
- £160 per parent, per child, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If you have already received a Fixed Penalty Notice, a second Fixed Penalty Notice will result in an automatic £160 fine.

If you have received two fines within a three-year rolling period, St Jude’s may consider a referral to the local authority for legal escalation. This could lead to a referral to the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to a fine of up to £2,500 and a possible 3-months custodial sentence.

When Penalty Notices are used

Penalty Notices may be used when absence is unauthorised.

For example;

- A parent has taken their child on holiday in term time without authorization, especially if this means the pupil misses assessments such as SATs
- Pupils are regularly late for school after the register has closed
- A pupil has 8 or more unauthorised absences within the previous 10 week period

For more information on local authority Penalty Notices, please visit the [Lambeth website for School Attendance](#).

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

- Regular communication with parents and carers regarding their child’s attendance, 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 to the Head of School as soon as possible
- Teaching staff to communicate attendance data during Parents and Carers' Evening (termly)

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

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.

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

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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses **10% or more of school**. Persistence absence is therefore categorised as anything **under 90%**. **Severe absence** is where a pupil misses **50% or more of school**. Severe absence is therefore categorised as anything **under 50%**.

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:

ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART

STAGE 1

- The first time a child's attendance falls below **95%** in a school year, 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 **90%** in a school year, this is identified as the **AMBER STAGE**. The child is now showing **persistent absence**.
- 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 half term and keep in contact with the family if necessary. If the child's attendance does not improve, a referral may be made by the school to a Lambeth Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- All information regarding STAGE 2 will be recorded on CPOMs by the Attendance Officer and shared with the Head of School (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 **85%** in a school year, this is identified as the **RED STAGE**. The child is still showing **persistent absence**.
- The child's parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer via letter (see appendix 4) and an Attendance Panel Meeting will be arranged to discuss their child's attendance.
- An Education Welfare Officer from Lambeth will also attend the meeting. Within the meeting, the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer will review the child's attendance and discuss ways to improve it.
- Failure to attend this meeting could lead to the school completing a formal referral to Lambeth for consideration of legal escalation.
- The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the child's attendance closely and keep in contact with the family if necessary.
- All information regarding STAGE 3 will be recorded on CPOMs by the Attendance Officer and shared with the Head of School (DSL).

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

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

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

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 and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area.

Date reviewed by governors:	June 2024
Next review:	June 2027

Chair of Governors: 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 Stage 1 Letter – Attendance Reminder

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]. This means that your child has lost approximately X days of learning and X lessons.

Our school expectation for attendance is 95% and above. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [insert child's name] academic achievement and progress.

We will monitor attendance closely and expect to see an improvement in attendance during this time.

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

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.

We want to support all parents/carers in improving their child's attendance. Please contact the school office on 020 7274 2883 if there is anything we can help you with.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Reid
Head of School

Appendix 3: Below 90% Attendance Letter

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE Stage 2 Letter – Attendance Meeting

Dear [insert parent's name],

I'm writing to inform you that [insert child's name] attendance at school is currently [insert %]. This means that your child has lost approximately X days of learning and X lessons.

This is below our school expectation of 95% attendance and above, and is classified as 'persistent absence'. As your child's attendance has fallen below 90%, 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 know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for children's success and fulfilment. However, we do acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and illnesses can occur.

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.

Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue and must be treated seriously. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. There is a risk that if your child's attendance remains at the current level, a referral may be made by the school to Lambeth's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). We will monitor attendance closely and expect to see an improvement in attendance during this time.

We want to support all parents/carers in improving their child's attendance. This meeting is an opportunity to work together to achieve this.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Reid
Head of School

Appendix 4: Below 85% Attendance Letter

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE Stage 3 Letter – Attendance Panel Meeting

Dear [insert parent's name],

I'm writing to inform you that [insert child's name] attendance at school is currently [insert %]. This means that your child has lost approximately X days of learning and X lessons.

This is considerably below our school expectation of 95% attendance and above, and is classified as 'persistent absence'. This is the Red Stage of our Attendance Policy. I would therefore like to invite you to an Attendance Panel Meeting on [insert date] at [insert time].

A Lambeth Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will also attend the meeting to discuss your child's attendance and persistent absence.

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

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. You are welcome to bring someone with you to the meeting if you wish.

Failure to attend this meeting could lead to the school completing a formal referral to Lambeth for consideration of legal escalation. As you have parental responsibility for [insert child's name] you are liable for prosecution if you fail to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time, as stated in the Education Act 1994, Section 444.

We want to support all parents/carers in improving their child's attendance. This meeting is an opportunity to work together to achieve this.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Reid
Head of School

Appendix 5: Attendance Action Plan

Attendance Action Plan

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