

The Federation of St James the Great and St John's Catholic Primary Schools



Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

General:

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. The School is committed to providing a full, fulfilling and outstanding education to all its pupils. We understand that statistically, pupils with the highest attendance levels achieve significantly more than their peers and for that reason, the School recognises that regular attendance helps to maximise the benefit each pupil will derive from their education. Attendance should also be punctual as late arrivals impact on teaching routines which may affect the learning of other pupils.

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- all natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Parents of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive that education by attendance at school or otherwise. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

The Schools must keep an attendance register, which is currently an electronic register.

Aim:

The School is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The School will work with parents and pupils to secure this aim. The Governors and the school leaders have set out an aspirational target of 97% attendance for all pupils.

The other purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that pupils who should be attending the School have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the School.

Taking the Register:

Pupils of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL pupils (including those under compulsory school age).

The register must be updated twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. In addition, all teaching staff must check that the pupils who should attend each lesson do so. They mark all children in attendance from a paper list. This detail is then input by office staff who ensure that the register is completed with the appropriate code, electronically.

The register must record whether the pupil is present, absent, attending an approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. Attendance and all forms of absence, i.e education elsewhere etc, should be recorded using the below noted Absence and Attendance codes.

(Education (Pupil Registration) England) Regulations 2006). Educational codes are:

/ \ Present at registration
B Off-site educational Activity (not dual registration)
C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by other codes)
D Dual registered (i.e present at another school or at a PRU)
E Excluded but no alternative provision made
F Agreed extended family holiday
G Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H Agreed family holiday
I Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J Interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
L Late but arrived before the register closed
M Medical or dental appointment
N No reason for the absence provided yet
O Unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P Approved sporting activity
R Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S Study leave
T Traveller absence
U Late and arrived after the register closed
V Educational visit trip
W Work experience (not work based training)
X Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z Pupil not on roll yet
School closed to all pupils

Where children are returning to school after long-term absence (longer than three weeks) the parents will need to meet with a member of the staff team to discuss reintegration strategies, especially where the absence has been as a result of illness or injury.

Absence

Should a child be absent from school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school by 9:00 am on the first day of absence. To report the absence, the parent should telephone or email the school office using the details below:

St John's – 0207 252 1859

office@st-john.southwark.sch.uk

St James the Great – 0207 703-5870

office@stjamesthegreat.southwark.sch.uk

If no contact is made, the school will make contact using the contact numbers supplied to the school by the parents to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. If, following this, no contact can be made and if the pupil does not return to school following the first day of their absence and no response has been received following the school's attempts to contact the parent, a senior member of staff at the school will consider whether a school welfare check is required. If a school welfare check is considered necessary, an attempt to inform the parent with whom the pupil is known to reside about this will be made in advance, thereby providing another opportunity to make contact with the school. If the school is unable to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil after taking these steps, then the school will report the matter to the police on account of the child being classed as a 'missing child'.

When the child returns to school, either the child should bring a note to school to explain the reason for the absence, or the parent should contact the school using the above details to explain the reason for the absence.

If no reason for the absence has been received, the school will contact the parent with whom the pupil is known to reside for further information. Without a satisfactory reason being provided, the pupil's absence is a risk of being recorded as unauthorised.

Persistent Absence

Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, the school will agree attendance targets with the parent and pupil, and if appropriate, with input from any relevant outside agency, which need to be kept under review. The school will remind the parent and pupil about the connection between attendance and attainment;

The school will involve the Education Welfare Officer / School Welfare Officer / Child and Family Support Worker / Local Authority, including for the purpose of prosecuting parents and issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice where appropriate if there is no significant improvement in attendance. The Local Authority may also decide to issue an Attendance Order.

Registration times:

Registration is at 9am, any child who misses registration will receive an 'L' (Late) mark in the register. The register closes at 9.30am. Any child arriving after this time will receive a 'U' mark, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.

In cases of persistent lateness, the school will look to work with the parent to understand any barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing, reinstating that school is a place of safety and support and that it may be appropriate to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners to seek a resolution.

Appointments:

Parents must make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, subject to prior approval, dental and medical appointments may constitute an authorised absence.

Holiday Leave:

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Permission will therefore not be granted by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School for holiday requests during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the pupil takes leave during term time without permission, it counts as unauthorised absence. From September 2016, the school introduced 'Fixed Penalty Notices' for parents who take their children on holiday during term time.

Exceptional circumstances:

The school considers each request individually, considering the particular circumstances and background context behind the request. However, parents should be aware that the School only grants an authorised leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance of the absence, in writing and addressed to the Executive Headteacher/Head of School. Requests should be addressed to the Executive Headteacher. Furthermore, unless there are exceptional circumstances that dictate otherwise, the School will not agree to absences of more than 10 school days in any school year.

The School understands that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers and will in collaboration with these pupils, parents, the Local Authority and other partners put additional support in place where necessary to help these pupils access their full-time education.

Responsibilities:

The Governing Body will:

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes
- Receive reports on attendance from the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Executive Headteacher/Head of School report
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the School, and is known by the parents

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will:

- Set attendance targets in accordance to guidelines, as part of the development plan and target-setting process

- Monitor progress monthly and offer signposting, support and guidance to those families who require support
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the School
- Remind Parents of their legal obligations regarding their child's attendance
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and arrange meetings when appropriate to discuss attendance and engagement levels
- Initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance
- Liaise with the LA over persistent absentees
- Work with the LA and Police when they wish to exercise their powers in relation to pupils of the school who are absent without lawful authority
- Make an annual report with statistics to the Governing Body

The School Office Staff:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements
- Work with class teachers to ensure the efficient running of the system
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor pupil absence
- Make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence
- Ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up, firstly by a telephone call before 10am on the first day of absence then in writing if no contact is made.
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Arrange appropriate training for staff
- Keep the Executive Headteacher/Head of School informed of the progress of the policy
- Advise the Executive Headteacher/Head of School on any strategies that could be initiated or improved
- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and share this information with the Executive Headteacher. This analysis will go beyond headline attendance percentages and will look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school.

Rewards for attendance:

At St John's, in order to encourage improved attendance at school, there are a number of rewards systems in place. These are individual certificates and medals for attendance, as well as class rewards for the highest percentage every month. Any authorised absence relating to medical conditions will not be considered during the calculation of the attendance percentage for the purposes of rewards. Given the high attendance of pupils at St James the Great, it has not been felt necessary to introduce this system.

Taking a Pupil off the Register:

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register for specific reasons set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. When such circumstances arise, the Executive Headteacher/Head of School will authorise the taking of a pupil's name off the register in accordance with these current Regulations.

Inspection:

The School Office Manager ensure that the School Admission and Attendance Registers are available for inspection by HMIs, registered inspectors and, for LA maintained schools, by a Local Authority officer.

Monitoring and Review

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will review this policy in accordance with the relevant legislation as well as any updated government guidance, such as the Department for Education Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will also review the working of the policy with the wider Senior Leadership Team and make at least annual reports to the Governing Body.

Date: September 2023