

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



"Learning and Growing Together, Unique in God's Eyes"

Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

"attendance is the essential foundation to positive
outcomes for all pupils"

Working together to improve school attendance: DfE 2024

Policy reviewed with Staff: September 2024

Policy reviewed by Governors: September 2024



*Learning and growing together,
Unique in God's eyes.*

Vision

At SJB our vision is to provide the highest quality education within a Catholic ethos. Through the love of God, we will foster individual uniqueness recognising every child is created in the image of God (Gen 1:27)

Together, with our families, our parish and wider community, we seek to create a safe, happy and inclusive school where children become confident, responsible, caring citizens, rich with the rewards that faith and learning bring to heart, mind, body and spirit. Learning and growing together; Unique in God's eyes.

Mission

We love one another, just as God loves us.

We are respectful, welcoming, and inclusive.

We learn together, using our unique gifts to achieve personal excellence.

We are active members of our parish, our community and wider world seizing every opportunity to make a difference.

'Love one another as I have loved you'

John 13:34

At St John the Baptist Catholic Primary school we believe that good attendance and punctuality are fundamental to fulfilling our school vision and mission statement. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Statement of Intent

We are committed to:

Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Offer early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

The Law on School Attendance

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. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Working together to improve school attendance (2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School and Parent Responsibility Agreement
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Complaints Procedures and Policy

Linked Policies and Guidance

This policy works in conjunction with the following school/LA policies/guidance:

- School Avoidance
- Flexi-schooling
- Reduced Timetables
- Traveller Education Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

Definitions

The following definitions apply (but are not limited to) for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency, taken with the school's permission
- Religious or cultural observances for days set aside by a religious body, for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.

Unauthorised absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Absence due to unofficial responsibilities at home such as looking after other children or sibling illness.
- Absence due to shopping, day trips, birthday celebrations
- Absence due to holidays in term-time which have not been authorised by the school.
- Parents removing children from school for no reason during the day.
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe absenteeism:

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year regardless of reason

Working in partnership to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Parental involvement

The school will strive to build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Build positive and respectful relationship with school staff.
- Call staff for help when they need it. (Book an appointment with class teacher via the school office).
- Actively support the work of the school, engage with support that is being offered.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.
- Inform the school of changes to address and ensure that emergency contact details are up to date.

What do the numbers actually mean?

In a perfect world, everyone would be in school for the full 190 days every year.

Without missing any days, the children would achieve 100 percent attendance.

Being realistic, we understand that children sometimes get ill, therefore we aim that all children are in school for a minimum of 96 percent of the year.

In an exam most people would be happy to get 80 or 90 percent. However, when talking about attendance these figures actually mean children have missed a significant amount of days learning. And the number of days missed gets bigger for each percentage as the year progresses.

If attendance is at ...	by the end of Autumn Term (out of a total of 70 days) your child has missed	by the end of Spring Term (out of a total of 60 days) your child has missed	by the end of Summer Term (out of a total of 60 days) your child has missed
100%	0 days of learning	0 days of learning	0 days of learning
95%	3.5 days of learning	6.5 days of learning	9.5 days of learning
90%	7 days of learning	13 days of learning	19 days of learning
85%	10 days of learning	18 days of learning	27 days of learning
80%	14 days of learning	26 days of learning	38 days of learning
50%	35 days of learning	65 days of learning	95 days of learning

Please note figures are rounded to nearest day/half day

If a child is sitting with attendance around 90% by the end of the year they have missed almost 4 weeks (a month) in school.

It stands to reason that by missing more days in school children make less academic progress than their classmates who attend regularly. Not coming to school has a negative impact on the progress children are making in their learning. By missing out on regular schooling some children are having to constantly try to play catch up. Having chunks of knowledge missing really disadvantages children compared to their classmates (for instance if they miss out the lesson that explain what a fraction is, they will really struggle when they start doing calculations involving fractions with different denominators).

By not attending school regularly, children also miss out on spending time with their friends. Infrequent attendance can have a negative impact on children's friendships.

Being absent from school can increase anxieties and have a detrimental effect on children's mental health due to the fact that friendship groups move on while they are away from school.

These issues can be overcome by simply ensuring children attend school every day.

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, **95 percent** throughout the year.

Attendance expectations at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Punctuality

Children are expected to be at school on time every day. Classrooms are open from 8:45 children to allow pupil to get settled for the day.

School Gate Opens	School Gate Closes	End of School Day
8:45am	8:55am	3:15pm

Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by **9.00am**. Pupils will receive a present mark if they are in their classroom by this time.
- Late registration opens at **9.00 am**. Pupil will receive a late mark ('L') if they are in school after the school gate has closed. Any late children must enter the school via the school office.
- The register closes at **9:25am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence ('O') if they do not attend school before this time.
- Pupils attending after **9:25am** will receive a mark to show that they were on site ('U'), but this will count as an unauthorised absence.
- After lunch, the register is marked by **1:10pm**.

Any children arriving late must enter the school via the front office with their parent/carer and late sign-in process must be completed.

If children are not picked up on time at the end of the school day, the teacher will take them to the front office and office staff will phone parents/guardians.

If you know you are going to be late for pick-up it would be helpful if you contact the school on **01273 607924** so we can let your child know and alleviate any worries they may have.

Sickness

Children do get ill which does mean they may need to have a few days off school. I am aware however that sometimes children are missing school when they could be in the building. The traffic light guidance below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come into school.

If your child is having a regular, reoccurring medical issue please let us know. We could get the school nurse involved and hopefully address your child's medical needs and improve their attendance.

RED – STAY AT HOME	AMBER – SEEK ADVICE	GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL
Sickness & Diarrhoea	Headache, Feeling Sick, Tummy Ache	Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired
48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.	Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, if in doubt contact the school for advice.	We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day

If your child is unable to attend school, please inform the school by 9:00 am on the first day of a child's absence. This is a legal requirement so that we know children are safe.

You can report absences by:

- sending a message via the **StudyBugs App**
- calling the front office on **01273 607924**
- emailing: **admin@stjohn.brighton-hove.sch.uk**

Parents/carers should leave their name, the name of the child and explain the reason for his/her absence.

Parents/carers should continue to report absence until their child returns to school unless they are able to supply a doctor/hospital note or letter explaining the expected period of absence; or in the case of long term illness.

If your child has a medical condition that could impact school attendance, please let us know. They may be support we can offer.

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

Appointments

In accordance with DfE guidance, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible.

We do understand that some appointments, such as hospital consultations are not always possible to arrange outside of school hours. However, if your appointment time allows your child to come to school for registration and then leave later this will have a positive impact on their attendance. Likewise, if they are able to be back in school after their appointment this will also have a positive impact.

Holidays in Term Time

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Examples of possible exceptional circumstances:

- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentation from the organisation.
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- A major family event such as the wedding of an immediate family member
- Serious or terminal illness of a close relative
- Significant family trauma has occurred and it is believed that a break is in the child's best interests.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

We fully understand that it is cheaper to go on holiday during term time but as a school we can only authorise an absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. A cheap deal is not deemed an exceptional circumstance.

If children need to be taken out of school during term time parents/carers need to complete a Leave of Absence Form - available from the school office.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The national threshold for triggering a Fixed Penalty Notice is met when a pupil has been recorded as having had unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions (5 or more school days) in a period of 10 school weeks. One or a combination of the following codes count as unauthorised absence:

O - codes (Unauthorised absences)

G - codes (Unauthorised term-time holiday)

U - codes (Lateness after close of registration)

The first fine is £160 *per parent/carer per child*, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a second fine is issued to that parent/carer within a period of 3 school years, the fine is £160 *per parent/carer per child* to be paid within 28 days and there is no reduction if paid within 21 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child, within 3 years of the first fine being issued. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action could be taken, such as prosecution.

There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, so disputes over how an absence is classified must be settled with the school before the absence is taken.

Full details relating to Fixed Penalty Notice amounts and thresholds can be found in the Code of Conduct on the Brighton & Hove City Council website.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and alter
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The school will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Review attendance weekly.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics/meetings.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

First day absence protocols

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The Office Manager will carry out the following procedures on a child's first day of absence.

- Check app messages/emails and answer phone messages for any notification of pupil absence.
- Update register with information about absence received from parent/carer.
- Check all completed registers and contact parents/carers of any children who are absent via the app
- If we do not hear anything within 30 minutes, telephone parent/carer.
- If no contact can be made record this on Studybugs.

Expectations in the Early Years

Children reach statutory school age the term after children turn 5. On admission to the school, the expectation is that children attend school regularly, like every other child in the school. This is to support their learning and development, to make sure that they are kept safe and they do not miss out on their entitlements and opportunities. Good attendance promotes good outcomes for children. Due to the fact that regular attendance in Early Years builds up good attendance habits we monitor attendance for all children in Reception, regardless of the term they were born.

Named Adult Support

For families who are struggling with attendance we will assign a named member of staff who will be the main 'attendance contact' for that family. This member of staff will make weekly contact with home and also have regular chats with the pupils. Contact should be positive and used to develop/strengthen the relationship between home and school.

Responsibilities of staff

Staff Member	Role
All class teachers	Completing the daily register in the morning and afternoon Academic advisors for missed learning.
(Office Manager)	Daily register checks to ensure absence is coded properly Check app /emails and phone before school to record any pupil absence using the correct Attendance Code. Carry out the 'First day absence protocols' Provide parents/carers with 'Leave of Absence Request Forms' Attend meeting with the with Attendance Team to monitor attendance.
Headteacher	Senior leader responsible for attendance Ensuring the Attendance Policy is implemented fully Identify any families who need a soft touch communication to try and address any low level attendance concerns. Adhere to the robust escalation procedures and decide on the correct correspondence to address any attendance concerns. Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures. Ensure Attendance is kept high profile in the school. Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work. Reward pupil attendance Attend weekly meeting with the with Attendance Team to monitor attendance
SENDCO and Inclusion Manager	Attend weekly meeting and liaise with the Attendance Team. Make reasonable adjustments to support pupils and families who are at risk of becoming persistence absentees. Identify and monitor pupils where SEND is a barrier to punctuality and attendance.

Pupil Attendance and Welfare Officer	Complete ATTEND forms when required to assess need. Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the Pupil Welfare Officer will: Welcome pupils back following any absence. Meet with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having. Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support. Make regular contact with families to discuss progress. Lead weekly meeting with the Attendance Team to monitor attendance and review progress and the impact of support. Complete any follow up activities following Attendance Meetings (telephone calls and letters). Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups. Co-ordinate attendance support and communication between school/families/external agencies
---	--

The School Governing Body	Regularly review attendance data at board meetings (including looking at school-level trends and benchmarking with other schools) Pay particular attention to pupil cohorts that have had poor attendance historically or face entrenched barriers to attendance. For example, pupils: • With a social worker • With a long-term medical condition • With special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) • Who are eligible for free school meals • From a background or ethnicity where attendance has been low Work with senior leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing challenge and support on these area. Scrutinise the school's absence and attendance rates.
----------------------------------	--

The Local Authority	The LA have the ability to gather attendance data directly from the school system via Study Bugs. They also: Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice. Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort). Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.
---------------------	---