

St James' Church of England Junior School

**Developing the love of life and learning in a caring
Christian community**



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At St James Church of England Junior School, "regular attendance" means attending school every day the school is open to them, on time.

2. Strategies for promoting attendance

At St James' Church of England School, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life opportunities and chances for children.

Because of this we:

- Ensure good attendance and punctuality is promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- Encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.
- Promote a home / school partnership built on communication and trust.
- Strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children.

St James' Church of England School works with parents to support regular attendance by communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, and providing an Attendance Team who are available to discuss any concerns.

3. Legislation and guidance

3.1 Legal Duty of Parents to Secure Regular School Attendance

The parent of any child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is registered. Failure to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution of the parent(s) in a magistrates' court.

In Education Law, (Section 576 of Education Act 1996), 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who has care of a child or young person, i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

3.2 Statutory Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020-2021 academic year](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. School procedures

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by: 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15 pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on **every day** of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). This can be done by calling 01452 520714 and choosing option 1 to leave a voicemail for the Attendance Officer. Alternatively, you can choose option 2 and speak to office staff directly.

Absence due to illness will be authorised with the appropriate code I, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or if the pupil's attendance is already below 93%.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, medicine packaging, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged 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.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, with the appropriate code M. Advance notice must be given and evidence will need to be provided (for example, appointment letter/card/text, prescription, medicine packaging). The parent/carer will also be required to inform the school in advance the length of time the pupil is likely to be away from school and who will be collecting/returning the pupil. If an appointment is in the afternoon, a pupil can attend school in the morning or in the morning can attend school in the afternoon.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (before 9.30am) will be marked as late, using code L.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 9.30am) will be marked as absent, using code U.

Parents/carers of pupils arriving late to school on 2 or more occasions in one week will be sent a warning letter. If 3 of these letters are received in one half term, the parents/carers will be invited in to school to meet with the Attendance Team. This will be an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) and an Attendance Improvement Plan will be put in to place for your child/children.

4.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences in order to:

- ascertain the reason
- ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents/carers who have not informed the school by 9.30am of their child's absence will be sent a reminder text during the morning session to call the school and leave a voicemail on the absence line. If no voicemail is received the school will call the parents and request a reason. Where school staff have an immediate concern, a home visit will be carried out.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported annually to all parents in the pupil's end of year report.

All pupils' attendance is analysed termly, and those who have attended 100% of sessions will receive a certificate of congratulation (6 times a year).

Pupils for whom attendance drops below 93% in a term will be monitored by the Attendance Team, who will write to the parents/carers to inform them of the exact percentage figure, and to warn them of the likelihood of an invitation to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) if improvement is not observed.

4.7 CME

We are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

(St James C of E Junior School Safeguarding Policy)

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to the Education Inclusion Service (EIS) at Gloucestershire County Council. CME refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity, e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks'. CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll/alternative provision.

This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either:

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected;
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or

- left school *suddenly and the destination is unknown*.

It is the responsibility of the Education Inclusion Service, on behalf of the Local Authority, to:

- collate information on all reported cases of CME of statutory school age children in Gloucestershire maintained schools, academies, free schools, alternative provision academies and Alternative Provision Schools (APS).
- liaise with partner agencies and other local authorities and schools across Britain to track pupils who may be missing education
- ensure each child missing education is offered full-time education within 2 weeks of the date the local authority was informed.

If the Headteacher suspects that a child might be missing from education, a CME referral will be made to the Local Authority.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher or Operational Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children, whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holiday's e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter of explanation from the employer)
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness. (To be seen as exceptional, this request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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. The school will authorise one day of absence due to religious observance, using the appropriate code, R.
- 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.

In addition the following absence will not be authorised:

- Absence for Y6 children during May when Statutory Key Stage Tests are completed;

Parents who wish to apply for a term-time absence must complete a Request for Leave form available from the school office. This should be signed by both parents/carers where appropriate. Term-time absences are considered on an individual case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific facts and context by the Headteacher who will respond directly.

New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations² governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 **no child may take holidays during term time**, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be expected to be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. This could result in a fine to both parents/carers of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. If the fine is not paid the Local Authority would then proceed to court for the criminal offence of non-school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Warning Letter will be issued to the parent/s carer/s that have day-to-day care and responsibility to inform them that:

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Executive Headteacher or Operational Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly, termly and annual basis:

- Weekly

The Executive Headteacher and Operational Headteacher receives a report of pupils with **90% or less**. These pupils are classified as **Persistent Absentees (PA)**, as they meet the absence threshold of 10%. The Attendance Team meet at least half-termly to consider the pupils with Persistent

Absence, to analyse the causes and arrange **Attendance Improvement Meetings** where appropriate.

Persistent absence means:

- At the end of term 1 = at least 7 sessions absence (3.5 days).*
- At the end of term 2 = at least 14 sessions absence (7 days).*
- At the end of term 3 = at least 20 sessions absence (10 days).*
- At the end of term 4 = at least 25 sessions absence (12.5 days).*
- At the end of term 5 = at least 31 sessions absence (15.5 days).*
- At the end of term 6 = at least 38 sessions absence (19 days)*

- Termly

Pupils for whom attendance drops **below 93%** in a term will be monitored by the Attendance Team, who will write to the parents/carers to inform them of the exact percentage figure, and to **warn them of the likelihood of an invitation to an Attendance Improvement Meeting** (AIM) if improvement is not observed.

- Annually

Pupils with attendance of 100% for the whole academic year will receive a certificate of congratulations.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Pupils' attendance data is collected, stored and analysed in SIMs and used internally to:

- track the attendance of individual pupils,
- identify particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and
- monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

- Weekly School Newsletter
- Termly (6 times a year) class certificate for highest attendance
- Weekly class highest attendance certificate
- Free Daily Breakfast Club
- A welcoming organized learning environment, which supports and celebrates its learners. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by SLT to ensure this.
- End of year special attendance certificates.
- Parent/Teacher consultation evenings. This provides an opportunity for class teacher to praise and recognize excellent attendance or share concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set.
- Attendance Catch-ups. This promotes self-monitoring of attendance and breaks down barriers to full attendance
- School attendance letters. The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 Governing Board

- The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis and agrees school attendance targets. It also holds the Executive Headteacher and the Operational Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy and ensures

attendance data is reported as required to either the Local Authority or DfE as requested in a timely manner.

7.2 Executive Headteacher/Operational Headteacher

- Responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy, and reporting data to governors.
- Deals with parental requests for leave in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.
- Considers the use of Penalty Notices in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.

7.3 Attendance Team/Inclusion Lead

- Communicates concerns to SLT/Attendance and produces data for analysis.
- Liaises with outside agencies such as the Education Inclusion Service (EIS), as necessary
- Supports SLT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- Writes Attendance My Plans for attendance below 90%
- Writes and shares individual Attendance Improvement Plans at Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) where attendance is below 90%.

7.4 Class teachers

- Complete the daily class attendance register with the pupils' twice a day; at 9.05 am and 1.15 pm.
- Follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment, encourage attendance and promote the best performance.
- Establish effective communication links with parents/carers to work collaboratively to meet the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
- Work with pupils/families of concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Attendance Team, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings and during Structured Conversations.

7.5 Attendance Team/Administrator

- Receive calls from parents about absence and record it on the school information management system.
- Operates school absence line and records messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- Oversees admission and induction of new pupils in liaison with the Family Support Worker.
- Implements the daily completion of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- Performs first day calls/texts to remind of procedure, when no reason has been received for absent pupil.
- Enters absence on school system alerting relevant staff.
- Informs the Inclusion Lead promptly, of concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- Monitors weekly attendance data for registration groups.

7.6 Parents

- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons e.g. PE kit, reading book bag and reading book.
- Telephone to inform the school on each day of absence of their child.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may affect learning.

7.7 Local Authority

- Supports attendance improvement, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Works with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensures that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Upholds and enforces the law in respect of attendance, child employment, involvement in entertainment and child protection.
- Supports the school in issuing penalty notices should this be appropriate.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher/Operational Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: Register Codes

Code	Present	Attendance (approved)	Absence (authorised)	Absence (unauthorised)	NOTES
I	✓				Pupil is present at morning registration
l	✓				Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B		✓			Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C			✓		Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D		✓			Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E			✓		Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G				✓	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school (includes holiday in excess of agreed period)
H			✓		Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I			✓		School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J		✓			Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment (includes visits to other schools for transfer)
L	✓				Pupil arrives late before register has closed at 9.30am
M			✓		Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N				✓	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (amended when reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason provided after reasonable amount of time)
O				✓	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
P		✓			Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R			✓		Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S			✓		Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T			✓		Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U				✓	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed at 9.30am
V		✓			Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W		✓			Pupil is on a work experience placement

Administrative Codes

X	Non compulsory school age absence	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			

Linked Policies

▪ Acceptable Use	▪ Early Help Offer
▪ Anti-bullying and hate	▪ Health and Safety
	▪ Relationships and Sex Education
▪ Behaviour	▪ SEND
▪ Complaints Procedure	▪ Safeguarding and Child Protection
▪ Confidentiality	▪ Safer Recruitment and Induction
▪ Curriculum	▪ Staff code of Conduct
▪ E-Safety (online safety)	▪ Whistleblowing