



SAINT JOHN'S

# Attendance Policy

Spring 2022

Designated Member of Staff	Deputy Head Teacher
Date of Issue	Spring 2022
Frequency of Review	Annual

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	February 2022	Review and re-format of the policy
2	September 2023	Reviewed and ratified at FGB T1
3	December 2024	Overhauled in line with August 2024 national changes
4	October 2025	Reviewed and ratified by governors at FGB 2

## **Introduction**

Saint John's CE Primary School aims to be a place "where we all flourish" and, as such, recognises that consistent attendance at school underpins this ethos.

## **Legal Framework**

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

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (2024) Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2025) Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE (2024) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## **Why is attendance at school important?**

Attendance at school ensures that children have access to our school offer which is summarised by our 5Cs: Curriculum, Community, Citizenship, Caring and Challenge. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence from school affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence or late arrival means that they miss valuable learning but also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

When children attend school every day, they have the best opportunity to access our holistic approach to education:

- They have opportunities to socialise with other children, making friends and learning valuable skills such as communication, empathy and sharing;
- They develop their understanding of themselves, their strengths and areas for development, as well as their basic needs such as: a good diet, exercise, sleep and personal hygiene;
- They explore and experience key values that will take with them into everyday life: resilience, perseverance, challenge, compassion, teamwork, confidence and many others;
- They experience being part of a community at Saint John's, which gives them a sense of belonging and supports their well-being;
- They develop their understanding of the local area through cultural capital opportunities;
- They have experiences that they remember and shape their interests, understanding of the world and their outlook on life: school trips, visitors, music lessons, sports events and many others;
- They have positive interactions with adults who are role models on a daily basis;
- They have at least two hours of physical exercise weekly;
- Finally, they learn: the curriculum is designed to build children's knowledge, understanding and skills. This stands them in good stead for future success in potential higher education, jobs and careers and opens doors to greater opportunities in life.

This policy is written in line with the most up-to-date government guidance, *'Working together to improve school attendance'* (August 2024).

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, children and all members of school staff.

### **Recording Absences**

Recording the attendance and the reason for absence for all of their pupils is a legal duty for all schools to complete. This happens twice a day: one session in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each day missed at school counts as two absences. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. It is crucial that school is contacted if your child is absent from school as the information about the cause of any absence is always required.

An **authorised** absence could be for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

An **unauthorised** absence could be for the following reasons:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after 9.30am
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

It is important for families to understand the differences between authorised and unauthorised absences.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing board will have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and LA.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary, or authorising a suitable member of staff to be able to do so.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Providing the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been classed as unauthorised.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

- Working with parents of pupils with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where pupils with SEND face barriers within school.

The School Attendance Champion at Saint John's CE Primary School is the Deputy Headteacher: Joe Vaughan ([jvaughan@st-johns-pri.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:jvaughan@st-johns-pri.gloucs.sch.uk)).

The person in this role will be responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Conducting analysis of attendance and absence data and measuring the impact of interventions to improve attendance.
- Working together with and communicate with families to understand context, background and barriers, and to discuss attendance and absences.
- Promoting high standards and expectations for attendance across the school.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- If necessary, and as a last resort, report absences that meet legal thresholds to the county council who will issue fixed penalty notices.

All staff want every child to attend school every day. As well as the personal, social, health and educational benefits that this gives to each child themselves, a school environment is a place that is at its happiest when all children are present and flourishing.

*"Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn."* (Working together to improve school attendance)

In conjunction with our expectations of staff at Saint John's which is outlined in our Behaviour and Relationships Policy, all staff will:

- Create a safe, stimulating and enjoyable environment where all children are given opportunities to achieve
- Be a predictable and consistent role model for all pupils to be able to engage with
- Create routines that ensure school life is predictable and children clearly understand the expectations of them
- Ensure that all children are contributing to our culture by providing feedback to pupils about their conduct and behaviour around school, both positive to celebrate successful moments and negative to encourage high standards
- Build relationships with pupils and families so that initial conversations around absences and attendance can occur positively
- Monitor attendance of the pupils in their care and raise any concerns or questions to the School Attendance Champion

*"All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community."* (Working together to improve school attendance)

In addition to this, school will:

- Where appropriate, reference attendance in newsletters that are sent out to families;
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report.

### **Safeguarding**

In some cases, irregular and inconsistent attendance at school may be a sign of safeguarding concerns; school will consistently monitor attendance and absence rates closely in relation to this and follow up any concerns with families and the local authority.

### **Responsibility of Children and Families**

Parents and carers have a *“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.”* (Working together to improve school attendance)

Parents will be responsible for:

- The attendance of their children at school.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details of more than one emergency contact and notify school if and when these details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the Local Authority.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent and advising when it is expected that their child will return.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

In order to support consistent attendance at school, parents should ensure:

- A consistent bedtime routine is established and kept to as much as possible
- Children have a suitable breakfast each day to prepare them for the school day
- Children are dressed and ready to leave and arrive at school on time
- Children have their belongings ready for school to avoid last minute rushing or forgetting specific items that are important for the school day e.g. book bag, lunch, water bottle

### **Absences in numbers**

190 school days per academic year (380 sessions available).

95% attendance rate = 9.5 days missed of school per year (19 absent sessions).

90% attendance rate = 19 days missed of school per year (38 absent sessions).

A lower attendance rate than 90% is defined as persistent absence and school will be in regular contact with you to improve this.

### **Arrival and Registration**

The school gates open at 8.45am and children are greeted in a positive manner to ensure a warm welcome is given to all. A member of the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) will be present on the gate, with Teaching Assistants and other members of the SLT in the corridors of the school building to greet the pupils on their way in. Upon arrival to the classroom, there are activities to complete in the

classroom with the class teacher present, greeting each child again. The gate closes at 8.55am and the register is taken shortly after this so that lessons can start at 9.00am.

A day counts as two attendances as the children are registered twice per day. The morning register is taken just before 9:00am and the afternoon register is taken at 1.15 pm.

On the rare occasion that children arrive or leave school outside of the standard school hours, it is essential that they are signed in or out from the office, as this is used in the case of an emergency as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked regularly by the Office Team and Strategic Leadership Team to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and patterns of any absences.

If a child arrives after the registration period, but before 9.30am, they will be marked in as **Late**. After 9.30am, this will become an **Unauthorised Absence** if no contact with school is made.

### **Late Arrivals**

If a child misses the start of the day, as well as missing learning and key information for the day, they will not be present for our meet and greet routine at the beginning of the day where connections are formed with staff and peers. This routine helps children to settle into school confidently so they are ready for the day. It can be daunting for children who are late to enter the classroom after everyone else has settled and pupils arriving late can also disrupt lessons for others. In conjunction with our school expectations, we encourage children to be 'Ready', which includes punctuality and time-keeping; we are preparing them for life beyond primary school.

### **What do I do if my child is going to be absent?**

*"You can only allow your child to miss school if either:*

- *they're too ill to go in*
- *you have advance permission from the school*

*There's [extra support available](#) if your child cannot go to school for long periods because of a health problem.*

*There may be other exceptional circumstances where you can ask to take your child out of school. Your school will consider each application and may let you take your child out of school."*

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>*

We recognise and understand that from time to time, an absence from school is unavoidable. If your child is going to be absent, it is the responsibility of the parents and carers to inform school by contacting us by 9.30am on the first day of absence. Please leave a message on our answer phone or speak to a member of the office, which opens at 8.30am

### **If your child is absent, we will:**

- Telephone or message you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you and record the relevant information
- Contact you to discuss the situation if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the School Attendance Champion if attendance falls near to 90%.

## Illness and Medical appointments

Every effort should be made to ensure children are at school. Government guidance states that: *“It's fine to send your child to school or nursery with a minor **cough** or **common cold** if they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. But if your child has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better, and the fever has resolved.”*

The following website lists which illnesses are common in children and advice for families: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

We understand that families' priority lies with ensuring their child is feeling well and sometimes it can be a challenge to bring children to school when they feel poorly. However, we ask that families work with us by bringing them to school as much as possible. We advise that it is always best to try and bring them to school: most children, once they are busy learning and with their friends, tend to feel better and they begin to build resilience to illness. However, on the rare occasion that we recognise that they are not themselves, and have not improved, we will always contact home to inform families so that they can organise for early collection.

It is important that families make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for a medical appointment, please inform the school office and the class teacher prior to the visit. The child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

In the case of illness, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to keep the school informed as to the likely return date of the child.

## Other Absences during Term Time

Parents/carers **must** obtain permission from the head teacher if they want to take their child out of school during term time. There is a form available at the school office for this. You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the head teacher in advance
- there are exceptional circumstances.

The local authority gives head teachers specific criteria in which to accept or refuse absence requests and, following your request, you will be informed whether it has been agreed or whether the head teacher is unable to agree to it. If leave is granted, it is up to the head teacher how many days your child can be away from school and this will be decided on a case-by-case basis. For these days, any absences from school will be recorded as **authorised**. Any additional days beyond this agreed amount will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

Holidays are not considered as exceptional circumstances.

*“A holiday is generally not considered an exceptional circumstance. You cannot usually take your child away during term time.”* <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Additionally, we will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for Year 6 pupils.

- When a pupil’s attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil’s attendance rate is already below the school’s attendance target for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

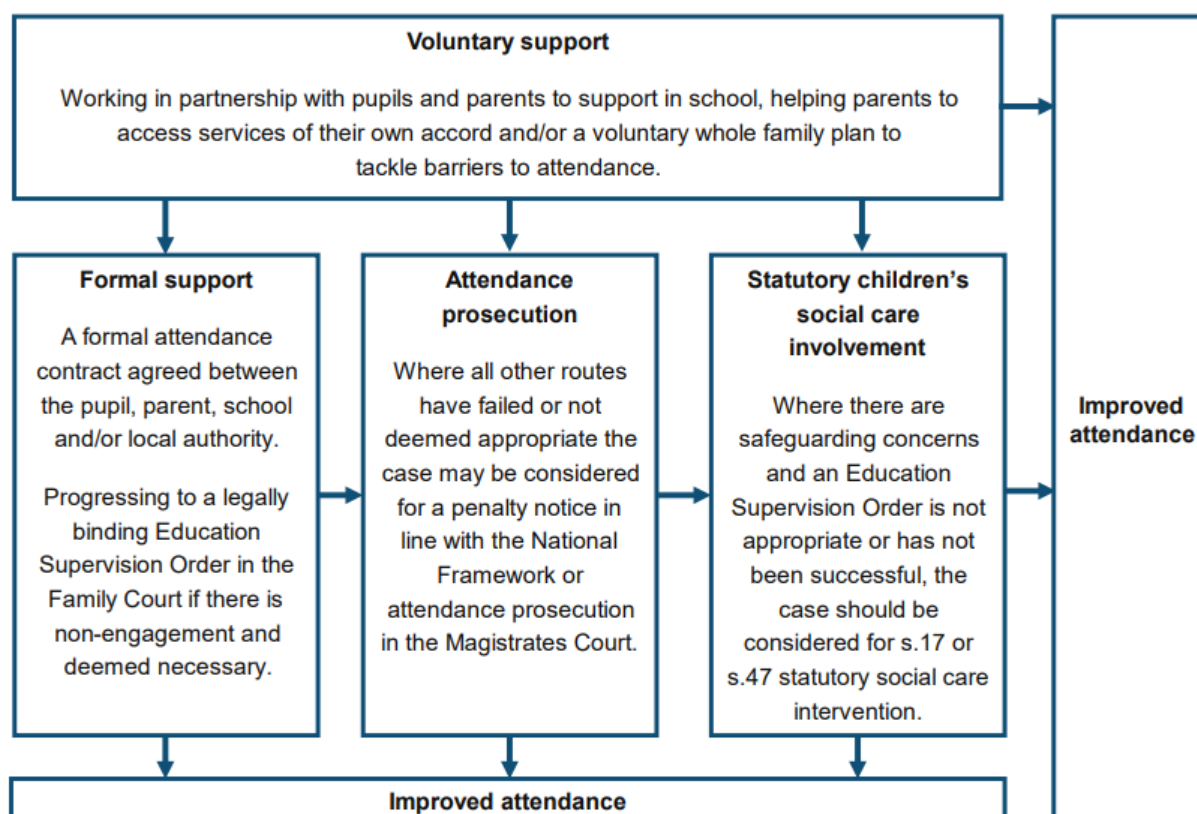
### Legal Processes

Parents and carers have a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that their children attend school consistently. In cases where absence rates have escalated beyond the threshold outlined in government guidance, our first response as a school will always be to work with families to put in place support to ensure children are back in school consistently as soon as possible.

The document ‘*Working together to improve school attendance*’ outlines that if attempts by school to improve school attendance have not been successful, they must consider legal intervention on a case-by-case basis. This may result in Penalty Notices being issued and collected by the local authority.

*“The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.”  
(Source: Working together to improve school attendance)*

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



## **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence is defined as when children miss 10% or more of their sessions across the school year. This equates to 1 day per fortnight or 19 days across the whole year. Research has concluded that absence at this level causes significant disruption to a child's education. Children who are showing persistent absence will be monitored closely by school and we will be in contact with families on a regular basis to support families to improve their child's attendance.

## **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

Children Missing in Education 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 a substantial period of time'*.

At Saint John's Primary School, we follow Gloucestershire County Council's Guidance which includes the following:

- First day calling
- Attempt to contact all known emergency contacts on subsequent days (at various times of the day)
- Gather further information including details of siblings from other schools, agencies, wider community (staff, other pupils, friends etc)
- Home visit within 5 school days
- Referral to Education Inclusion Service no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence

## **Education Inclusion Service**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Inclusion Service at the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

## **Further Reading**

This policy should be read in conjunction with: Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Looked After Children Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy and Early Help.

## **Government guidance on School Attendance:**

- Working together to improve school attendance – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)
- Government guidance on school attendance and absences – <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>
- Government guidance on illnesses and school attendance – <https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education>
- NHS guidance on illnesses and school attendance – <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

## **Appendix A: Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence (including but not limited to):

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason – equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

## Appendix B: Registration Codes

The school will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register