



# ST. JOHN'S WALHAM GREEN CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"Love one another"*

Policy Name	<b>Attendance Policy</b>			
Date	July 2021	Review Date	July 2022	
Responsibility	FGB	Resources	Curriculum	Headteacher
Committee agreed on:	Signed by:			
FGB agreed/ratified on:	Signed by:			

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*St. John's Walham Green Church of England Primary School aspires to develop young people who are successful students, independent learners and confident individuals. We strive to ensure that our pupils become responsible citizens with a concern for the well-being of all God's creation.*

### Equal opportunities statement

St John's School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all pupils irrespective of race, religion, gender, language, disability or family background. We believe that equal opportunity is at the heart of good educational practice and challenge any form of discrimination. All staff and governors are responsible for ensuring that we implement this policy".

### Introduction

School attendance is a priority for St John's Walham Green CE Primary School. Good attendance can contribute to achieving all five outcomes listed in Every Child Matters. Regular attendance also enables teaching staff to monitor pupils' welfare, thus contributing to the safeguarding agenda.

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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.

## 2. Legislation and 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states *that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Refer to section 4. 'Recording attendance' of this policy for more details (page 3)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governor for attendance is Alero Abbey and the committee responsible for attendance is Curriculum.

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school;
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors;
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

#### **3.3 The attendance officer and senior administration officer**

The school attendance officer and senior administration officer:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level;
- Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher;
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices;

#### **3.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

#### **3.5 School admin staff**

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **4. Recording attendance**

#### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day 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: Attendance Codes for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) the school day is **8.55am – 3.20pm**. For Key Stage 1 the school day is **8.55am – 3.15pm** and for Key Stage 2 the school day is **8.55am – 3.30pm**. Pupils must arrive in time for:

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at the following times; 12:30pm for Reception classes, 12:45pm for Key Stage 1 classes, 1:00pm for Nursery, 1:30pm for year 3 and 4 classes and 1:45pm for year 5 and 6 classes and will be kept open until 10 minutes after the time the register is open.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the School with an expected date of return. This must be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. The Headteacher can authorise absences through ill-health but is not obliged to and should not do so when there is any doubt about the reason for the absence and further investigation might be necessary.

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

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and have strategies in place to address lateness.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Registration begins at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.00am.
- On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures.

Registration and entry to classes:

1. The playground gate on Filmer Road, will open at 8.30am each morning. Parents/carers must stay with their child or children until the school building opens at 8.45am when pupils are allowed into their class.
2. The 3 main entry doors into the school building will close at 8.55am.
3. If a child arrives after 8.55am parents are requested to walk around to the school office and sign your child in as late. Your child will receive a yellow late card which they must give to their class teacher. Pupils arriving after 8.55am will be marked late in the register.
4. The playground gates will close at 8.55am. We ask that parents/carers leave the playground by this time as the playground is required to be secured.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Will follow up on their absence with their parent/carer 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.

To follow up on absence the school will take the following steps;

1. On the first day of absence. If no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer the school will contact them by telephone on the day of absence. If the parent/carer is not contactable on the telephone, an email and/or letter will be sent.
2. If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will make a referral to the ACE team (Attendance, Child employment and

entertainment, Elective home education and children missing education) and/or Early Help/Localities team.

3. A member of the ACE team will make repeated efforts to contact the parent/carer and establish why the pupil is not attending school. If the problem is quickly resolved and the pupil returns to school, or if a legitimate reason is provided for the absence, the ACE team will continue to monitor the situation.
4. After the school has made contact with parents/carers and invited them into the school but no significant improvement has resulted or if the pupil is still absent without a proper explanation, school staff can refer to Locality /Early Help services for support. If the FSLs accepts the request they will work with the family to achieve an improved pattern of attendance and to address the issues which lie behind the non-attendance.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Individual pupil attendance is reported to parents within end of year reports each July. Throughout the school year the school monitors, contacts and reports attendance to parents where necessary as set out in Appendix: Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Other authorised circumstances relate to occasions where 'exceptional circumstances' occur. For example, family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

#### Illness

Sometimes, when a child complains of feeling unwell, parents/carers are not sure whether to bring their child to school. More often than not, once at school, the child settles and manages to get through the day. Should a parent/carer decide to bring their child to school and the child continues to feel unwell, the school will always contact parents/carers immediately.

Parents/carers must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the School with an expected date of return. This must be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

The Headteacher can authorise absences through ill-health but is not obliged to and should not do so when there is any doubt about the reason for the absence and further investigation might be necessary.

Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. or in some cases a doctor's note.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example, family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Major religious observances**

These will be in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

### **Family Holidays and Extended Leave**

Authorised leave will **not** be granted for holidays. The school holiday dates are published in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holiday during the school holidays.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter will state:

- The expected date of return;
- That parents/carers must contact school should any delays occur;
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected.

## **5.2 Reducing persistent absence**

In order to reduce persistent absence, the school will follow procedures set out in Appendix: Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart and will refer to section 6. Strategies for promoting attendance, of this policy.

We monitor the attendance of all pupils because persistent absence or pupils missing from school may be an indicator of welfare concerns.

In the event of a pupil missing school or persistently absent we will make a referral to the Early Help team in the Local Authority and follow the LA protocol for children missing in education (CME).

If a parent notifies the school that they are removing the child so they can be educated at home, we will notify the ACE team - Tri-borough Children's Services Attendance (statutory), Child Employment/Entertainment, Elective Home Education/ Children Missing Education (ACE). If the child is already known to Social Care, we will notify their allocated social worker immediately.

- CME are children who have no educational provision. They are *not* children who have provision but are poor attenders or those who are approved as electively home educated.
- Because all LAs have a statutory responsibility to all CME, ACE will be responsible for maintaining a Tri Borough register of all children notified to ACE as out of school (this register includes EHE children as well as CME children).

- Any professional who identifies a child he or she believes to be either CME or EHE is asked to inform ACE at once in writing, providing the child's name, address, d.o.b. and previous educational provision if known.
- ACE will then work with colleagues as appropriate to ensure CME are placed and EHE families are properly supported using agreed procedures.
- If any professional has wider concerns about a family whose child is CME or EHE, they will either complete the appropriate Locality/Early Help referral form (4c) or, if there are child protection concerns, an Interagency Referral Form (5d).

### 5.3 How the School responds to absences

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer the school will endeavour to contact them on that day. If the family is not contactable on the telephone, an email and/or letter will be sent
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will make a referral to the ACE team (Attendance, Child employment and entertainment, Elective home education and children missing education) and/or Early Help/Localities team.
- A member of the ACE team will make repeated efforts to contact the parent/carer and establish why the pupil is not attending school. If the problem is quickly resolved and the pupil returns to school, or if a legitimate reason is provided for the absence, the ACE team will continue to monitor the situation.
- After the school has made contact with parents/carers and invited them into the school but no significant improvement has resulted or if the pupil is still absent without a proper explanation, school staff can refer to Locality /Early Help services for support. If the FSLs accepts the request they will work with the family to achieve an improved pattern of attendance and to address the issues which lie behind the non-attendance.

### 5.4 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 5.5 Circumstances where a penalty notice may be issued

The issue of a Penalty Notice may be considered in cases where a pupil is absent from school and the absence is unauthorised. Penalty Notices can be used by schools as an alternative to a referral to Localities Services and Early Help teams in LBHF, RBKC and WCC in cases of persistent non-attendance.

The issue of a Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate in any of the following circumstances:

- Cases of overt truancy.
- Cases of parentally condoned absence, where this can be demonstrated.
- Instances where parents/carers take children out of school for holidays/leave in term time.
- Persistent lateness (unauthorised).
- Where a child has been excluded from school and is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification within the first five days of the exclusion period.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We have a number of positive strategies at St John's for rewarding and improving attendance at school.

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Reward class attendance by celebrating it in the weekly newsletter and providing the highest attending class (per phase) with the Attendance Heroes roller banner to display in their class for the week;
- Friday Celebration assembly is used as a means of promoting good attendance;
- Reward 100% attendance for individuals with certificates for each term;
- Reward 100% attendance for individuals with a certificate for the academic year;
- Send 'Thank you' letters to parents of pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year;
- Attendance displays are clearly visible in the weekly newsletters and on the playground noticeboards;
- Our target attendance is 96.3% Attendance is monitored on a half termly basis. Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below this figure will receive a letter requesting a meeting at school.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all uninformed absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In case of long-term frequent absence due to medical conditions, verification from a GP or other relevant body may be requested;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all pupils;
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the ACE team.

### Parent responsibilities

The law states quite clearly that children between 5 and 16 years old must receive education.

- Children are of school age from the start of term after they are 5 years old until the last Friday in June in the academic year when they are 16 years old.
  - As a parent or carer, **YOU** are responsible for ensuring your child gets full-time education.
  - Are you certain your child is at school when he or she should be, and on time?
  - If your children do not attend, you and they risk having to go to court to explain your actions.
- 
- Children who work during school hours are being exploited. Both you and their employer could be prosecuted and fined heavily if this happens.
  - (A leaflet about the by-laws is available from the ACE team).

Talking to your child about school **every day**, if possible. This means not only are you sure that your child has been to school that day, but you can also find out if your child is having problems at school such as bullying or difficulties with the work, and you can help deal with those problems. You can celebrate and reward any success your child has.

Do not wait for a problem. Make an appointment to see your child's teacher if you have any concerns. Be part of the PTFA and support events. The more involved you are, the happier your child will be at school. Be involved in your child's homework. Ask what homework he or she has each night. Have a look at what is to be done and offer help if it is needed. Ask to see the work when finished and be positive about what your child has done. If in doubt, find out if you think your child might be missing school, talk to the staff. If you are not sure whether your child is allowed to miss school for any reason in particular, call and ask. Keep a note of term dates, holidays, teacher training days, etc.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer, Mr James Welch and senior administration officer, Mrs Sheila Baxter, at our school monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis in the form of attendance meetings.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. A Doctor's certificate may be requested as proof of absence. If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

### Why attendance and punctuality matters

Across one school year:

Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance

14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance

20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance

30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two-year frequency by the attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		

<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix: Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart



### Flowchart for Attendance Monitoring

