



*Loving learning and loving one another, as God loves us.
Celebrating success in its many forms and overcoming challenges.
Praying for and caring for our whole community.
Living in the light of Christ and as a light to others.*



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Shevlyn Byroo Headteacher	Date: October 2024
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school vision, culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Attendance officer and SLT to monitor pupil attendance daily.

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Shevlyn Byroo and can be contacted via 01323 471781 or office@sjm.academy

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/attendance officer (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is

3.5 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 by 9.00 am and 1.20 pm.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance as required.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30 am on the day of the absence, report absence on Arbor including detail of what is wrong with your child and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record for pupils of compulsory school age:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school on time each school day.

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The registers must state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Session times for St Johns Meads Primary are:

Morning Session 8.50am – 12pm

Reception and KS1 Afternoon Session 1.30pm – 3.20pm

Morning session 8.50am – 12.20pm

KS2 Afternoon session 1.30 – 3.25pm

Morning registers will close at 9.20am. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers are closed, he/she will be marked as 'absent'. Classroom doors will be closed at 8.50am for the start of registration and therefore any pupil arriving after this time will need to enter the school via the main entrance.

Lateness - The school policy is to encourage punctuality but also to actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. As many English or Mathematics lessons are the early learning work in readiness for the first lesson in the day the child will miss the main input and be disadvantaged. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously, the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. If, however, a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Class teacher/Headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory solution

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 with 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.**

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.

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

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels, pupils attendance is available for all parents to see on the Arbor app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – the Headteacher will use her discretion having heard about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family, and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation
- Weddings of parents and siblings - – the Headteacher will use her discretion having heard about travel and wedding arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled

The Headteacher reserves the right to request supporting documentation when making the decision whether to authorise an absence as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

What circumstances are not exceptional? *(this list is not exhaustive)*

- These include: -
- the availability of cheap holidays:
- an absence or holiday paid for, or booked, by someone else
- an overlap with beginning/end of term
- a mix-up in term dates

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least fourteen days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form.

An withdrawal from learning form can be obtained from the school office or by emailing office@sjm.academy which should be completed and returned at least 14 days before the proposed absence.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carer must pay £80 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

6.1: Support for pupils and their families:

The school recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents and carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used will include:

- ✓ Discussions with parents
- ✓ Referrals to support agencies
- ✓ Pupil voice
- ✓ Play therapy
- ✓ Specific interventions
- ✓ Reward systems
- ✓ Time limited part time timetables
- ✓ Behaviour support

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will seek support from the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance team.

6.2. Strategies for promoting/rewarding attendance:

Weekly attendance display updated to show the children who is leading on attendance.

Weekly School Newsletter

The school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- The Attendance Officer will provide all class teachers with attendance data for the term. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top. Every pupil will be colour coded as indicated below:

Dark green – pupils with attendance between 100% to 95%

Amber – pupils with attendance between 94.9% and 90.1%

Red – pupils with attendance 90% and below

- The pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention ([Appendix 2](#))
- The Headteacher will report on whole school attendance and attendance for vulnerable groups of pupils three times a year in the Headteacher's report to governors.

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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil has 90% attendance and therefore misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

[See Appendix 3 -Flow chart for reducing persistent and severe absence.](#)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from DCAT, the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Mrs Langley Deputy Head. 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 1: 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
Authorised absence		

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	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

Appendix 2: Escalation of attendance interventions

Dark green – pupils with attendance between 100% & 95%

Parents will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's excellent attendance just before parent consultation evenings.

Amber – pupils with attendance between 94.9% and 90.1%

The class teacher will raise concerns with the parents regarding their child's attendance to try to:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the pupils' absence
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance e.g. if your child had not missed x days, they could have achieved

In addition, a letter will be sent to parents advising of concern and outlining the parent's responsibilities. If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The school will draw up an attendance support plan involving the setting of an attendance target and the implementation of supportive strategies as agreed with the parents and child concerned.

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred further support will be sought from TASS (Team Around the School Setting) or a home visit may be considered where appropriate.

Red – pupils with attendance of 90% and below

Pupils who have attendance is 90% and below are considered to be persistently absent from school. The Attendance Lead and/or the Headteacher will organise a meeting with the local authority to raise concerns with the parents and an individual attendance support plan will be drawn up with the parents and pupil concerned. The attendance support plan will involve the setting of an attendance target to see the pupil move to the band above as well as the implementation of supportive strategies.

Appendix 3: Flow chart -Reducing persistent and severe Absence

