



Attendance Policy

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*Excellence for all
Service to others
Inspired by Christ*

Policy ratified by the Strategy Team

Owner: James Steadman

Quality Assured: Daniel Walton

Date: October 2023

Next Review Date: October 2024

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1. Aims

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School is dedicated to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

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 Mr. J. Steadman and can be contacted via:

Tel: 01474534718 or email: jsteadman@stj.kent.sch.uk.

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 and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare team to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/Senior Assistant Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Ensure attendance registers are up-to-date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, the attendance officer will contact parents/guardians on the first day of absence by phone call to investigate child's absence from school.
- Where there has been no communication, the attendance officer will send letters to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)

The attendance officer is Mrs J. Abbott (Years 7-11) & Mrs A. Chambers (6th form) and can be contacted via:

Tel: 01474 563755 email: jabbott@stj.kent.sch.uk (Years 7-11) or achambers@stj.kent.sch.uk (6th form)

3.5 Class Teachers & Form tutors

Class teachers & Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMs (the schools MIS) promptly at the start of each lesson.

3.6 School Admin/Pastoral staff

School Admin/Pastoral 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 attendance office in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every weekday 8:40 AM -3:20 PM on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 AM on the day of the absence (the school expects this to happen on the day of absence 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 and arrive before 8:40 AM but no earlier than 8:20 AM
- Attend every timetabled session 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 every timetabled lesson. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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 at school by 8:40 AM on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 AM and will be kept open until 9 AM. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:05PM (Wed/Thu/Fri) & 1:20PM (Mon/Tue) and will be kept open until 1:20PM (Wed/Thu/Fri) & 2:30 (Mon/Tue)

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 8:30 AM or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance officer (see also section 7).

Parents can email (attendance@stj.kent.sch.uk) or call (01474 563755) the attendance line

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 3 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 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 should inform the attendance officer in advance of the appointment and supply evidence of the appointment in order to authorise the absence.

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

Lates to School

Students who arrive late to school (after 8:40 AM) without a valid reason will be monitored by the Pastoral team and sanctions will be put in place.

Lates between lessons

Students who receive 3 or more lates to lessons across the week will receive a Year Leader detention followed by a concern letter poster directly home to parents. See Appendix 2 for an example of this letter and the escalating sanctions for continual lateness to lessons.

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/Message 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 conduct 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.

The school will publish 3 milestone reports across the academic year which include students' punctuality to school and overall attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher (or a representative of 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:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parents will not be in receipt of any leave soon that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable, and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree to the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

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 2 weeks before the absence. Parents/Carers should complete our planned absence request form for any planned absences <https://forms.office.com/e/jTFNhejApG>. 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, barges (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

The following reasons are examples of absence that **WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED**:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

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/carers 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Reward students who achieve 100% attendance each term with 10 good comments
- Issue certificates/postcards/letters to those with positive attendance.
- Celebrate individuals in Year & whole school assembly.
- Give students access to rewards events & student leadership positions in school.

7. Attendance monitoring

- The schools core attendance (attendance officers & Senior Leader attendance lead) team meet weekly to review individual student's attendance patterns.
- Weekly safeguarding meetings where students of concern are discussed actions put in place.
- Weekly/termly monitoring of unauthorised absence.
- Weekly/termly monitoring of Illness (see appendix 3 for general protocol for monitoring daily attendance).
- Well-being phone calls to be implemented for students ill for 3 or more days.

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

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 Pastoral teams via Year Leader dashboards 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 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 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
- Refer to School-Home-Support - <https://www.schoolhomesupport.org.uk/> a practitioner will work closely with the family to support students struggling with attending school.
- Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) attended by School Liaison Officer, Mr. Steadman and/or School Governor and the school Attendance Officer.
- Hold form Target Setting Meetings with the School Liaison Officer.
- Home visits by the School Liaison Officer.

- Liaising with other agencies.
- Complete a front door referral.

8. Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School asks that parents fully support this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.

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
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

Appendix 2: Lates between lessons

	Consequence
1 week within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 1</u>	Year Leader detention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 X lates = 30-minute detention • 4 X lates = 45-minute detention • 5 X lates = 1 hour detention & a punctuality report <i>NB: If a student receives more than <u>10 lates</u> within any given week this will result in a Head Teacher detention.</i>
2 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 2</u>	2-hour Head Teacher detention
3 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day in an alternate internal provision (the student will not be attending their regular timetabled lessons and he/she will also lose their social time). • Meeting with parents to discuss our concerns regarding punctuality to lessons.
4 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 4</u>	1 day at our St George's provision (student will be booked into St George's inclusion room for the day).



St. John's Catholic
Comprehensive School

September 2023

Re: Term 1 Lesson punctuality concern
«Forename» «Surname», «Reg»

Dear «Parental_Salutation»,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well.

I am writing to you with regards to «Forename's» recent punctuality to lessons. The school carefully tracks the number of lessons students are marked 'late to lesson' throughout each week. If you are receiving this letter, it is because your child has been marked 'late to lesson' at least 3 times across the week, each occasion without a valid reason e.g. a note from a member of staff explaining lateness. This letter provides you with information on how sanctions will escalate if your child does not improve their punctuality to their lessons across the weeks and months ahead.

The school has high expectations of student punctuality as it ensures students make the very most of their learning time in every subject. If a student is late to lesson, this not only has a detrimental impact on their learning but also for the entire class. Valuable learning time is lost every time a student arrives to lesson late, as teachers must stop their lesson, question the student, and ensure registers are updated accordingly. Ensuring a student is registered each lesson is a safeguarding requirement and, if a student does not attend, then staff must stop their lesson in order for the school to locate the student.


Please see below our escalated sanction system regarding lesson punctuality.

No. of weeks with 3 or more lates	Consequence
1 week within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 1</u>	Year Leader detention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 X lates = 30-minute detention • 4 X lates = 45-minute detention • 5 X lates = 1 hour detention & a punctuality report <i>NB: If a student receives more than <u>10 lates</u> within any given week this will result in a Head Teacher detention.</i>
2 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 2</u>	2-hour Head Teacher detention
3 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 3</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day in an alternate internal provision (the student will not be attending their regular timetabled lessons and he/she will also lose their social time). • Meeting with parents to discuss our concerns regarding punctuality to lessons.
4 weeks within a term <u>CONCERN LEVEL 4</u>	1 day at our St George's provision (student will be booked into St George's inclusion room for the day).

With your support, I look forward to seeing an improvement in «Forename's» punctuality to lessons. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of your child's Year team.

Please be aware that we start each term with a clear record, you may have previously received a similar letter to this if we had punctuality concerns in previous terms.

Kind Regards,



Mr. J. Steadman
Senior Assistant Headteacher Pastoral
Excellence for All Service to Others Inspired by Christ

Tel: 01474534718

Fax: 01474 563763

Email: office@stj.kent.sch.uk

Address: St John's Catholic Comprehensive School
Rochester Road, Gravesend, Kent. DA12 2JW

Appendix 3: Daily Attendance Protocol (Tracking)



STJ Attendance daily protocol

At St. John's we will follow the below flow diagram for absence where we have not received any form of contact from parents & carers.

NB. A text message will be sent to parents/carers every day of an unknown absence.

Day 1

- On the 1st day of absence, a text will be sent home to parents/carers asking for the reason for absence.
- *Those students deemed vulnerable will receive a phone call from the welfare team.*



Day 2

- On the 2nd day of absence parents/carers will receive a call from the school asking for the reason for absence.
- *Those students deemed vulnerable will be prioritised for calling.*



Day 3

- On the 3rd day of absence parents/carers will receive a call from the school asking for the reason for absence.
- The school may also conduct a home visit to see the child in person depending on the historical attendance of the child.
- For those students who have been ill for 3 days consecutively (I code) Pastoral teams will conduct a well-being phone call.
- *Those students deemed vulnerable again will be prioritised for phone calls/visits.*



- **5 or more days unauthorised** after these attempts to investigate attendance will result in a penalty notice being issued unless there are extenuating circumstances. No contact in this time will also trigger a home visit.
- Those with poor attendance due to illness will be targeted for attendance improvement meetings.