



Attendance Policy

Principles

At St John's College School, we understand the importance of a pupil's attendance in terms of their progress and emotional wellbeing. An ethos of high levels of attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued across our whole school community. We monitor attendance regularly and offer support through our pastoral system for any pupil who may find attending school a challenge. Attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, and the school places emphasis on this in its communication with parents/guardians. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.](#)

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support children and their parents/carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

School education lays the vital foundations for a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a child's good attendance as part of our safeguarding duties.

Expectations

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Telephone or email (bhoffice@sjcs.co.uk or shoffice@sjcs.co.uk) the School Office on the first morning of absence with brief details.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.

- Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

We expect that school will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual children'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 unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, information from a GP or other relevant body may be requested to assist school in offering appropriate support.
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Provide intensive and bespoke support to children at risk of persistent absence.
- Work alongside other services and teams to support children's attendance. E.g. the Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care.
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and children regarding attendance.

The Attendance Champion for our school is Mrs Lisa Bedford. She is a member of the Senior Management Team and can be contacted on 01223 272718

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter (email) and/or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

We expect that all children will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that governors will:

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the Head to account for the implementation of this policy.

We expect that the Local Authority will:

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support in some cases of persistent absence.
- Identify suitable provision and reasonable adjustments for pupils unable to access education due to prolonged ill health.

School Attendance Strategy

Whilst Lisa Bedford is our Senior Attendance Champion, for day-to-day aspects of attendance, please contact reception at Byron House (01223 353817) or Senior House (353532).

We are responsible for all children's attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked and we will work with families in many different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this is important for this work.

School is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance data and using this to inform how we support pupils. We share this data within the school staff to ensure continuity of support. Attendance data is analysed regularly, and children whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern will be noted. This will be communicated with parents and carers. Support will then be put in place. Children whose attendance falls to 90% or under are deemed to be 'persistently absent'. Pupils whose attendance is 50% or under are 'severely persistently absent' and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

We have a whole-school ethos of promoting attendance. This means that we train every staff member in attendance procedures so that everyone understands the processes for attendance and the pastoral structures in school. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy, and constantly refer to it.

Our early intervention process

Our aim is to work collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Concerns about late arrival or a pattern of absences will be shared. If a pupil is regularly late for school or is often absent, then the parents/guardians will be contacted so that a solution to the problem can be found.

All staff at St John's College School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning. They are also concerned about each pupil's safety, welfare and happiness. Frequent absence may raise safeguarding concerns. It is important to note that, all schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or following an unauthorised absence of more than 10 school days (continuous). The School will comply with its statutory duties and local authority requirements with regard to reporting unauthorised absences.

- Step One. Email home from child's class teacher (Byron House) or tutor (Senior House) advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness, and offering support.
- Step Two. A letter from the Headmistress/ Deputy Head (Byron House) or Head of Year / Assistant Head Pastoral (Senior House) to offer support and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.
- Step Three. Send an invitation to attend a meeting to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed. (Attendance Contract)

Registration

At both sites, the **Registers close at 8:30am**. Children arriving between 8:30am and 8:45am should make their way to their Form rooms, where they will be marked in as late by the teacher. Children who arrive **after 8:45am** must report to the School Secretary before joining their class such that their safe (and late) arrival can be recorded in the register.

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.

Pupils who arrive at school after registers close, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Head may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original

entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for three years as a record.

Lateness

When children arrive late at school, routines are disrupted, affecting other children's learning. They miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills. Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8:30 am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, the school secretary will attempt to make contact with the parent/carers once the registers have closed at 8:30 am.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes (see appendix 1).

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carer to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.

Should a parent need to take their child out of school during the day, for a planned and approved absence or because they are ill and are going home, then they must 'sign them out' at the Secretary's desk at either Byron House or Senior House as appropriate. Our aim is to be sure that, at all times, we know which children are on the school premises.

At Byron House, including our Kindergarten, we expect children to be collected by a parent or carer. If the person collecting your child is someone other than a parent or carer, then written permission of this should be given in advance to your child's Form Teacher.

Illness

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness can return after they have been 48 hours clear.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school.

Medical Needs and SEND

When children are prevented from accessing school due to physical or mental ill health, school will try to identify the barriers these pupils face, and support any medical needs. Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we may seek medical information to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision. This may take a variety of forms, which we will discuss with parents/carers on an individual basis.

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with, the pupil and their parents/carers.

Definitions of Leave

We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carers, such as:

- Visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Coding is always at the Head's discretion.

Term-Time Leave:

Authorised Absences

We cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences, which may include:

- If a child is ill or receiving medical attention
- Days of religious observance, notified in advance
- Absences due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness)

Parents/guardians need to request authorisation well in advance, if any absence can be foreseen. At Byron House, authorisation for appointments within the school day should be directed to Althea Pipe (apipe@sjcs.co.uk) and at Senior House these should go to Lisa Bedford (lbedford@sjcs.co.uk). At the induction meetings held each year for parents/guardians of children about to enter the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained.

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for Heads agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken and should be submitted to the Head Teacher (swright@sjcs.co.uk).

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis.

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education.

Elective Home Education

It is a parent's right to be able to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home if they wish to. There are legal responsibilities parents/carers must fulfil if they wish to educate their child at home, which are monitored by the Local Authority. Please speak to the Head in the first instance if you are considering this option.

Support

If a parent/guardian needs further support around attendance, they should contact: **Byron House – their child’s Form Teacher**
Senior House – their child’s Tutor

The School’s Senior Attendance Champion is Lisa Bedford (Assistant Head Pastoral)

Appendix

Register Coding:

1. If a pupil is present in school the following codes from table 1 should be used

Code	Register Text	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present (AM)	Present at school at AM	Must be in school at 8:30 registration	Attending (Present)
\	Present (PM)	Present at school PM	Must be in school at afternoon registration	Attending (Present)
L	Late	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.	Attending (present)

2. If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code from table 2 should be used.

Code	Register Text	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Attending Education provision arranged the LA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The nature of the provision must also be recorded.Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Educational visit	Attending an Educational visit or trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip.Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.Code V can only be used if the pupil is present at the visit.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

P	Approved sporting activity	Participating in a Sporting Activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority • The activity is of an educational nature. • The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; • and the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience, and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
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W	Work experience	Attending Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA • In session for which it is recorded • The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014. • the activity is of an educational nature. • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience, and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
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B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	<p>Examples of nature of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attending taster days at another educational institution</i> • <i>Attending courses at college</i> • <i>Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school</i> • B code can only be used if the activity is of an educational nature. • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience, and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
D	Dual Registration	Dual Registered at another school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. • Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. 	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)

3.

If a pupil is absent with leave

Code		Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
C1	Regulated Performance or Employment abroad	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance licence issued by LA or • Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or • Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose 	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental appointments	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement in advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • Minimum time necessary • Where pupil is absent at registration 	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Leave of absence for Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement in Advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution. 	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination		Authorised absence
X	Untimetabled for non-compulsory school-aged pupils	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For part time attendance • Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X 	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
C2	Part-time timetable	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional circumstances • if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time. • Temporary 	Authorised Absence

4.

C	Authorised absence for exceptional circumstance	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional circumstances • No blanket approach • Head of School's discretion • Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. 	Authorised absence
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Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons

Code		Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. • To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school 	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Religious Observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves) 	Authorised Absence

5.

I		Illness (not medical appointment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. 	Authorised Absence
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education 	Authorised Absence

Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause

Code		Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if— (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil under section 508B(1) of the 1996 Act(13) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil because of section 508E(2)(c) of the 1996 Act(14) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and— (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil’s home; (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school; and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.	Not a possible attendance

6.

Y1	Provided Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Part school closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Whole school closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.	Not a possible attendance

Y5	Criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	<p>The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial, or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention. <p>A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e., non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day</p>	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	<p>The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. 	Not a possible attendance
Y7		Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	<p>This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.</p> <p>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))</p>	Not a possible attendance

Y7	Unable to attend because of other unavoidable Cause	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))	Not a possible attendance
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6. Absent for unauthorised reasons.

Code		Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Holiday not granted by school	<p>The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.</p> <p>A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.</p> <p>If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.</p>	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence

U	Late (after registration closed)	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes	Unauthorised absence
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Administrative Codes

Code	Meaning	Statistical Value
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	NOT COLLECTED
#	Planned whole school closure	NOT COLLECTED