



# St James Infant & Pre-School

## Attendance Policy

**Statutory** / Non-statutory  
**Annual review** / 2 yearly review

Date policy adopted				
Review date	Nov '18	Nov '19	Nov '20	Oct'23
Reviewer's name	CC	C Cousins	CC	CC
Date minuted by committee meeting	01.19			
Next review due by	Nov '19	Autumn 2	Oct 22	Oct 24

# St James Infant School

## Attendance Policy

### *Aims of Policy*

- *To emphasise the importance of high levels of attendance at school*
- *To make clear to everyone the school's expectations about attendance*
- *To clarify the legal position and expectations relating to attendance*
- *To stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance*

*In order for children to achieve their potential they need to have excellent attendance and therefore this is a very important issue to everyone involved at St James Infant and preschool .It is a key indicator of an effective school and as such is included in all OfSTED inspections and contributes towards their overall judgement. Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16. (Gov.uk 2021)*

### *Procedures for recording attendance*

*The class teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken in the class register. The registers open at 8.55am and close at 9.10am. Any children entering school after the registers have closed, are entered in the late register with a reason recorded by the office staff. The children are then escorted to their classrooms. Any absences are recorded by the office staff after receiving confirmation of the reason for the absence.*

*If children are absent but there is no confirmation by morning break, the Pastoral Support Officer or office staff will endeavour to contact the parent / carer to ensure the safety of the child. Codes are entered in the class registers to explain the absence (see attached list). The Department for Education has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences and activities that would classify as unauthorised.*

### *Procedures for promoting regular attendance*

*A range of rewards are used to promote good attendance, both at individual and class level.*

*All staff are clear about their role in promoting attendance. Parent / carer and children are encouraged to understand the importance of attendance and punctuality for successful learning.*

*This issue is regularly addressed through newsletters, messages on Class Dojo, parent' evenings, assemblies and work in class. Attendances and absences are also included in a pupil's annual school report. The Office Manager, Pastoral Support Officer and Head teacher will regularly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance, including patterns of absence.*

### *Dealing with absence*

The PSO will investigate any unconfirmed absence, in the first instance. If absence continues or is not authorised, the Head teacher will become involved. Where the parent / carer cannot be contacted by telephone, a letter will be written and posted as soon as possible. Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. In extreme circumstances the PSO may require medical evidence to validate a reason provided by the parent. If a child's attendance is consistently below 90% their parents maybe invited to attend a 'Attendance Panel', with the aim of putting in place an 'Attendance Contract'. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the head/PSO and may lead to a penalty notice being issued.

A 'Traffic Light' system is used to clearly advise parents about their child's attendance. Twice a year parents are given a red, orange (amber) or green letters. A red letter advises the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 90% (persistent absenteeism) their child's attendance will be monitored weekly and if no improvement is seen they may be asked to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. Children with attendance between 90-95% receive an amber letter and 95% a green.

Parent / carer and children are made aware of what they miss if they are absent from school and are encouraged to catch up with their work. Parent / carer are routinely contacted in cases of poor attendance and steps are taken to build positive relationships with, and to support, particularly hard-to-reach families. Effective links with a number of agencies ensure that a 'joined-up' approach is used to plan and implement appropriate intervention with individuals or groups experiencing attendance difficulties. When a child has been absent from school for an extended period consideration will be given as to whether a reintegration plan is required.

#### Staggered approach

Day 1- Ring

Day 2- Ring

Day 3- Ring/email/Dojo

Day 5- home visit, deliver letter

Day 10- report missing from education (CME)

-dojo message

-verbal warning

-warning letter

-traffic light letters

-Attendance contract

Review contract if needed

-EHA

## *Monitoring*

*School have been allocated a SASO (school attendance support officer) West Northamptonshire. 2022*

*The SASO will be allocated all contacts that relate to pupils at your school and will be your point of contact for any queries this academic year. Termly meetings will be arranged. The conversation will focus on students that are:*

- ☐ Pupils at risk of exclusion*
- ☐ Persistent absence pupils.*
- ☐ Year reception expected but failed to arrive.*
- ☐ Reduced timetables and managed moves.*
- ☐ Students not attending for 15 days or more due to medical issues.*
- ☐ Students receiving their education off site.*

## *Children Missing from Education (CME)*

*If a pupil is absent, we will fulfil our responsibility by contacting the parent / carer on the 1st Day of absence and continuing to make every effort to locate the pupil. The PSO/office staff are required to try and contact the family by home phone, mobile, letter and lastly make a home visit to ascertain if the child is still residing at the address the school has .In some circumstances a home visit will be made earlier if the child is being monitored by the Welfare team. If the pupil is still absent by the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive school day, we will contact the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team and make a formal online referral to the Children Missing from Education Team (CME). The CME is responsible for ensuring that Northamptonshire County Council implements the statutory duty to have tracking and monitoring policies and procedures in place for locating children missing from education in Northamptonshire. The CME Team aim to ensure that the tracking processes for children who are missing from education are effective, cohesive and multi-agency, which will enable Northamptonshire County Council through the CME Team to implement its statutory responsibilities on behalf of the Local Authority.*

*Children who leave the country will automatically be reported to the CME team. The school is responsible for gathering evidence to support the CME team track the child.*

## *Why children go missing*

*Children may run away from a problem or to somewhere they want to be, or they may be coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25% of children that go missing are at risk of serious harm.*

*The following are common risk factors that can precede a missing incident:*

- Arguments and conflicts;
- Conflict within a placement;
- Poor family relationships;
- Physical and emotional abuse;
- Boundaries and control; and
- Step parent issues.

*The immediate risks associated with going missing include:*

- No means of support or legitimate income that can lead to high risk activities;
- Involvement in criminal activities;
- Becoming a victim of abuse;
- Becoming a victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation;
- Alcohol or substance misuse;
- Deterioration of physical and mental health;
- Missing out on education; and
- Increased vulnerability.

*The longer term risks include:*

- Long term drug or alcohol dependency;
- Crime;
- Homelessness;
- Disengagement from education;
- Child Sexual Exploitation; and
- Poor physical and/or mental health.

[View the NCC webpage on Children Missing Education](#)

*Children can become missing from education for a number of reasons. For example:*

- Fail to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stop attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent / carer
- Fail to complete a transition between providers
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile, e.g. parent / carers in the Armed Forces, Gypsy, Romany & Traveller families and Economic Migrants
- Children at risk of a forced marriage, children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Children from armed forces
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Trafficked children

*Leave of Absences*

*The school supports the view that every lesson counts. Leave of absence in term time can only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances at the discretion of*

*the Head Teacher. Initially parent/carers meet with PSO to discuss requests for absences and collect an absence form. Then all leave of absence requests must be made in writing to the head prior to the leave being taken. Any leave of absence that has not been authorised by the head will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Please see appendix one for examples of authorised and unauthorised absence.*

### *Holiday in term time*

*As from September 2013 legislation has changed relating to school attendance. As a result of this legislation head teachers will no longer be able to authorise any absence for the purpose of a holiday, for any children of compulsory school age, during term time. Any holiday for those children in term time will be treated as unauthorised.*

### *Fixed Penalty Notices*

*If a request is for 5 or more days consecutive leave and is not authorised and meets the criteria outlined in the Penalty Notice Checklist, it may be referred to the EES for a fixed penalty notice to be issued. A fixed penalty notice may be issued to each parent which will incur a fine of £60.00 for each child. (2 parent family, 2 children equal £240.00). In addition to this, any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a six week period could incur a penalty fine. Fixed Penalty notices can only be issued with prior written notification*

*If a school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days, the Education and Inclusion Partnership team may consider a Penalty Notice is not appropriate.*

*In these instances the matter may proceed to a prosecution.*

*If two penalty notices are issued in the child's school career a third 5 day or more leave of absence may result in a court summons.*

*It is the statutory duty of every parent / carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).*

*Formal and legal action where voluntary support hasn't worked or isn't taken up*

*Will my local council take legal action against me?*

*If your child is absent from school without permission or a valid reason, you are likely to be breaking the law. Where this happens, your child's school or your local council will speak to you to understand the reasons. If your child hasn't attended because they are struggling to, both your child's school and your local council are expected to put the right support in place to help you. If you do not take part in that support, or it doesn't work because more structured formal support is needed, then your child's school or your local council may: - Invite you to agree to a parenting contract. This is not a punishment or a criticism of your parenting. It is a more formal action plan that sets out what you will do to improve your child's attendance and what your child's school and/or your local council will do to support this. - Apply to the family court for an education supervision order to ensure you and your child receive advice, assistance and direction to make sure they receive a suitable full-time education. If you do not make any efforts to improve your child's attendance or it is clear you have knowingly allowed your child to be absent without good reason – for example, taking your child on holiday in school time without permission – your local council may prosecute you to protect your child's right to a full-time*

education. Even during this process, you have the opportunity to accept and engage in voluntary support (such as an early help assessment) or formal support (such as a parenting contract or education supervision order) to prevent the case from going to court. If found guilty you may be given a parenting order, community order, a fine of up to £2,500 or in very exceptional circumstances a sentence of up to 3 months in prison.

### *Lateness*

School doors open at 8.45am and the registers open at 8.55am. Doors are then closed at 9.00am and the registers are closed at 9.10. Any child entering school after 9.00am is considered 'late' but only recorded as late if they arrive after the registers close. And a reason will be recorded. If a child arrives after 9.30am they are classed as absent for that session and an appropriate code is recorded. In exceptional circumstances, for example heavy snow, the registers may be kept open for a longer period.

Lateness is monitored regularly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the office staff will inform the Head teacher/PSO who will take appropriate action. Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken which are recorded as an unauthorised absence, are also subject to Penalty Notices.

### *The Role of the Class Teacher*

- The teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken. The register must be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session.
- To inform the Head Teacher/PSO of any concerns regarding persistent absence or lateness.
- To speak to the parent / carer regarding unexplained absence or lateness.

### *The Role of the Pastoral Support Worker (PSO)*

- The PSO will investigate any unconfirmed absence on the first day of absence by telephoning the child's contact numbers to find a reason for the absence.
- To support families experiencing difficulties.
- To jointly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance and lateness.
- To keep a log of any actions / conversations with parents / carers.
- Relay any Leave of Absence request forms to class teachers.
- To draw up and monitor Parent Contract
- To report CME to Local Authority

### *The Role of Office/Admin Staff*

- To monitor completion of class registers on a daily basis.
- To provide the Head Teacher with regular attendance and late monitoring print outs.
- To instigate regular Late Gates.
- To record attendance using the **Arbor** attendance register. The appropriate codes must be used (see appendix) as agreed.
- Record any absence notification (for telephone messages) on the office

*whiteboard if message has been received in the office. The appropriate absence code will be entered into the register.*

- *To jointly monitor and challenge reasons for non-attendance and lateness.*
- *To jointly investigate unconfirmed absences.*

#### *The Role of the Parent / Carer*

- *It is the statutory duty of every parent / carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996). Parent / carer can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late.*
- *Parent / carer must contact the school on the first day of absence notifying the school the reason why the child will not be attending.*
- *Where a message confirming absence has not been received, an explanation will be requested from the parent / carer.*

#### *Monitoring*

- *Governor presence in school on "late gate" mornings.*
- *Registers and the late register will be monitored by Head Teacher and the office staff.*
- *The school has adopted a "staged approach" to absence and lateness, although these letters may be adapted for individual circumstances.*
- *Persistent absence is monitored and addressed weekly.*
- *The Governing Body regularly monitor attendance at the Performance and Standards committee meetings.*
- *To attend 'Attendance Panels'*

*This policy will be reviewed annually*

*Reviewed by Clare Cousins October 2023*



## **Appendix 1 - Authorised / Unauthorised absence**

### **Authorised**

- **Illness**
- **Emergency and planned medical appointments**
- **Days for specific religious observance**
- **School closure**

### **May be authorised in exceptional circumstances**

- **When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis**
- **Family wedding / civil partnership**
- **Educational opportunity**
- **Visit to a new school**
- **Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time**

### **Unauthorised**

- **Family holidays**
- **Family trips**
- **Birthdays and other celebrations**
- **Poor weather where the school remains open**