St. James CE Primary School

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Attendance Policy

Flourish
Respect Courage
Friendship Develop
StrongGrowth
Community StJames' Strive
God Trust Kindness
Perseverance
Freedom Unique
DeepRoots Positivity
WholeChild
Responsibility

St. James CE Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of our pupils and staff.

Statement of Vision and Values

In consultation with pupils, parents, governors, community members and staff our vision and values were generated based on our inspiration from the Parable of the Sower and how this links to our children and their journey with us.

> **Our School Vision:**
> Within our community we strive to develop deep roots, strong growth and freedom to flourish as a unique and whole child of God.

Matthew 13 - The Parable of the Sower – '… but the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. …….produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Values

We decided at St James CE Primary School that Kindness and Respect are values which we feel unpin our vision and are incorporated in all we do and say – so therefore these two values will be taught alongside all the other six values we have chosen.

½ termly focus	Value
Autumn 1	Responsibility
Autumn 2	Friendship
Spring 1	Perseverance
Spring 2	Trust
Summer 1	Courage
Summer 2	Positivity

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Carefully monitoring the attendance of every pupil, as well as all groups of pupils, across the school
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Providing support to the families within our school community to enable them to overcome barriers to good attendance
- Working closely with the Local Authority to quickly and effectively address any issues around attendance

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

School Attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities, May 2022

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

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Executive Headteacher/Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

Ian Thompson, the Chair of Governors, is the allocated governor for the monitoring of safeguarding, which includes attendance.

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the 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 and making referrals to the Educational Welfare Team at the Local Authority where necessary. The Head of School works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence. This may sometimes lead to the issue of fixed-penalty notices, which is also the responsibility of the Head of School, in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer.

3.3 The Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer

The Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer (Ella Tona) is responsible for checking and coding the registers, monitoring attendance at an individual pupil level and reporting concerns about attendance to the Executive Headteacher/ Head of School. The Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer discusses attendance and punctuality with parents and carers in an informal capacity and where needed, arranges calls and more formal meetings with parents and carers to discuss attendance issues

3.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, both in the morning and afternoon. Class Teachers are not expected to code the register to indicate why a pupil is absent, but simply to indicate whether or not the pupil is present at the time the register is taken. Class Teachers are responsible for raising any concerns they have about attendance with the Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer and/or the Head of School.

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3.5 School Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and/or pass this information on the Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to make sure their child attends every day on time (the register is taken daily at 8:45am, so it is the expectation that pupils are in their classrooms, ready to learn by this time). Parents/carers must ensure that their child attends school whenever they are well enough to do so, and should make every effort to ensure that their child's attendance does not fall below 95%. Parents/carers should endeavor to make any appointments needed for their child outside of school time and should not their child on holiday in term time. If a parent/carer intends to take their child out of school for an extended period of time for any reason (for example, a funeral abroad), they must inform the Head of School in writing **before** the period of absence is due to begin.

Parents/carers are responsible for calling the school office before 8:45am if their child is going to be absent from school, to explain the reason why and advise when they are expected to return. If a child's attendance is lower than 90%, their parents/carer is also expected to provide evidence for each absence (for example, a letter from a doctor or an appointment card).

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We 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:

* Whether the absence is authorised or not

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* 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 by 8:45am on every school day.

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 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office on 0208 804 1987.

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

As above, where there are concerns about persistent absenteeism (i.e. the child's attendance is less than 90%), the school is required to ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence in order to authorise the absence.

If evidence is not provided for a child who has an attendance level of less than 90%, 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. The parent/carer should inform the school office and/or the Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer prior to 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 9:00am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After 9:00am 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/ text 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

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of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a doorstep visit to check on the welfare of the pupil (please note that for any pupil with attendance that is less than 90%, we will always carry out a doorstep visit on the first day of any absence if we have not received a call from the parents/carer to inform about their absence and have not been able to contact the parent/carer via phone, text or email)

* Identify whether the absence is authorised 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 the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels within their end of year report. This information is also available to any parent/carer at any point throughout the year at their request – parents/carers to ask at the school office if they wish to obtain a copy of their child's attendance overview.

Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, the school will send a letter to the parent/carer to inform them of this, and to let them know about the procedures for authorising any further absence. The parent/carer may also be invited to a meeting with the Head of School, the Parent Liaison and Wellbeing Officer and the Education Welfare Officer.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School 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 Executive Headteacher/Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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 one week before the absence. The Executive Headteacher/Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

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- Attending a funeral – more than one day's authorised absence will be granted where this is being held abroad

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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

- Requests for holidays in term time will **not** be agreed unless there is another contextual, valid reason for the trip and the child's attendance prior to the holiday is above 95%

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

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

Penalty notices can be issued by the 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. Supporting Good attendance

We always seek to promote good attendance, and although we don't give awards specifically for good attendance, we consider it very important to support every child to have the best possible attendance. This means that we provide whatever support is needed for the family to enable their child to attend school regularly. If a family is finding it difficult to get their child into school, for whatever reason, we will intervene early to help remove any barriers to good attendance and support directly or signpost the family to other agencies who can help.

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7. Attendance monitoring

As stated above, attendance is monitored daily for individuals and classes of pupils. Support and intervention is swiftly implemented for any pupil or class where absence is causing concern.

Whole-school attendance data is monitored and analysed on half-termly basis. Where it is identified that attendance is poorer for specific groups of pupils, interventions and support are implemented and meetings held with individual families to identify barriers to good attendance and discuss means of overcoming these.

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.

7.1 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 regular meetings with the parents 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years. 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

Policy written: September 2022

Review due: September 2024

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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

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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