

ATTENDANCE POLICY

St John's Infant Church of England Primary
School



Headteacher	J Strachan
Attendance Lead	Nikki Gething
Governor ratified	September 26
Next renew	September 2026

From the smallest of seeds fed with faith and love, our St John's family will flourish and grow.

All of our policies are written with the aim of improving our school and of realising our Christian vision:



Our vision underpins every document, procedure and decision made within our setting. We are committed to enabling all members of our small community to **flourish and grow** through the values of faith and love and to ensuring that they go on equipped for 21st century living and to have a positive impact on the world.

Based on the teachings of Matthew 13:31

Please note: all details as laid out in this policy are taken from government legislation. This can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Our attendance staff

- All school staff are committed to ensuring that every pupil meets the 95% attendance rate set by the Head Teacher
The designated attendance Lead at All Saints is Miss J Strachan
The Attendance officer is Mrs N Gething
- The designated attendance champion at our school is the Head Teacher Miss J Strachan
- The designated staff who work with parents on attendance issues at our school are the FLO; Mrs Bell and Mrs Gething.

Our rationale for the school's attendance procedures

It is the law that all children of compulsory school age must receive fulltime education in order for them to flourish academically and socially/emotionally.

A child reaches compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday.

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At St John's School we believe that having a good education will help to give children the best possible start in life. If children do not attend school regularly, they miss out on key aspects of learning, will acquire gaps in their understanding and will not be able to keep up with subsequent work that follows missed school days.

At St John's the minimum percentage we set for attendance for each pupil is 95%.

Both parents and school have a moral responsibility to support and encourage regular attendance.

It is the parent/carer who is actually responsible in law for ensuring that their child:

- Attends and remains at school
- Arrives on time
- Is suitably dressed for school
- Is emotionally and physically in good condition to learn (i.e. not over-tired, upset or unwell)

Our daily attendance routine

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

In the morning, school gates open at 8.40 am. Upon arrival, pupils walk themselves into the building and after depositing their coats, bags and packed lunch boxes, report straight to their classroom.

At 8.45 am all children should be in class completing early morning work at tables ready for register to be called at this time.

The school gates close at 8.55am. Pupils who arrive after 8.55 am must report to the school office on entering the building. This is to ensure that the child's arrival in school is noted and that the register is updated accordingly.

Pupils who arrive up to 9.30am will receive a late mark in the register which will show as L.

Any pupil who arrives after 9.30 will be marked with a U which will show as an unauthorised absence for the session. From the Autumn term of 2024 a U mark can be used solely or in a combination with any other

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unauthorised session marks to issue a penalty notice. If 10 unauthorised sessions are recorded over a period of 10 weeks a penalty notice can be given.

The register is called again in the afternoon; 1pm after lunch and lunchtime play

How parents/ carers should request an absence from school

Only the Head Teacher, on behalf of the Governors, can authorise pupil absence. The likelihood of being granted an authorised absence is highly unlikely

Parents must write to the Headteacher explaining reasons behind their request for their child to miss school and the Headteacher will respond in writing according to the school and Local Authority attendance policies.

The Head Teacher can only grant permission for an authorised absence in cases of exceptional circumstances – unexpected family bereavement, unexpected serious accident etc

What parents/carers should do if a child cannot attend school due to illness

Parents/ Carers should phone (01634844135) or email the school office (office@stjohns.sch.uk) before 9.30am on the first day of illness so that we know children not at school are absent with parental knowledge.

If a child is missing school due to recommended medical advice, written medical evidence is required upon return, to explain why pupils have missed school.

Where no communication about an absence through illness is received in school – the absence will be recorded on the child's file as unauthorised and a letter asking for medical proof of absence will be sent out to parents after 3 days.

All notes explaining absence will be retained on the pupil's personal school file.

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What parents/carers should do if a child has to miss school due to a medical appointment

Parents should avoid booking medical appointments during the school day if at all possible.

If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, parents should send a letter in advance to the school office to explain the absence. A letter from the hospital/dentist/doctors should be submitted to the office with this letter to be copied.

Children should not have the whole day off if they have a medical/dental appointment: they should be collected from the school office in time to travel to the appointment and then returned to school when their appointment has finished.

What parents should do if they wish to request an absence from school due to a family holiday

Parents should ask in writing for permission to take their child out of school for a holiday.

The school will NOT grant any leave of absence during term time for family holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances – see above.

A child's absence during term time can seriously affect their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for subsequent lessons and their confidence and emotional well being can suffer as a result of this.

The head teacher will consider each request individually and take into account the circumstances. This will include, the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the frequency of requests, whether advance notice of at least 10 working days was given, and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

If a written application for holiday leave is refused and the child is absent without permission, then it will be classified as an unauthorised absence

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and the case will be referred to The Attendance Advisory Service who monitor school attendance. They may issue a penalty notice (fine) to parents. (Amounting to £160.00 per child per adult which is reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served.)

If a parent is issued with 2 penalty notices over a period of 3 years the fine will be a flat £160 per child per adult. However if a third penalty notice is served within 3 years, this could lead to a prosecution or other attendance legal interventions.

<u>First offence</u>	<u>Second offence</u>	<u>Third offence</u>
Parent/carers are required to pay this penalty notice (£80) within 21 days, or the amount will increase (£160) and is expected to be settled within 28 days.	If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within any three-year period, the charge will be a flat rate of £160; there will be no reduction if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices for absence before the 2024-25 school year do not count.	A parent cannot receive more than two penalty notices for the same child within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, prosecution will be considered.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in a 10 week period may result in a penalty notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool.

Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead.

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This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

How the attendance advisory service is used by the school

If there is a high amount of absence for a pupil, either unauthorised or authorised, the school AAP becomes involved and will liaise with the school to:

- Speak with the parent/carer to ascertain why the child(ren) are not meeting the school's expected attendance percentiles of 95%
- Send a court warning letter if the absence has not improved by a review date or an acceptable reason been given (i.e. medical notes received) advising the parents of possible court action and that they may also be invited to an attendance panel
- Continued, unauthorised absence will result in the case being referred to a legal panel for court prosecution consideration

Penalty notices can be issued by local education authorities, head teachers, authorised deputy and assistant head teachers, the police, community support officers and accredited persons.

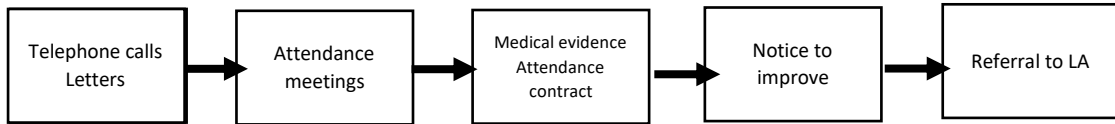
Circumstances in which a penalty notice might be issued, include:

- Parentally condoned truancy
- When a high number of term time absence applications are refused by the head teacher and recorded in the register as unauthorised absence
- When 10 unauthorised absences are listed for a child within a 10 week rolling period
- As a follow-up to a truancy sweep

St John's School AAP – attendance advisory practitioner visits the school on a termly basis to inspect the class registers and follow up cases of pupil absence concerns.

A summary of how attendance concerns are escalated at this school

If the school are concerned about a pupil's attendance rate they must use the procedures set out below:



The school move on to the next procedure in the process if the child's attendance does not improve and meet the expected standard of 95%

How the school rewards good attendance

The school keeps its attendance records on computer.

At the end of every week the class with the best attendance is announced in a whole school assembly setting and a trophy of honey the dog is awarded.

At the end of the school year all children with 100% attendance are given a ticket which is put into a hat. Three tickets are then chosen and the winning children are given big prize eg family tickets to a theme park, bicycle accessories or a digital tablet etc...

All pupils receive a computer generated attendance statement as part of their annual report during the Summer Term.

How the school monitors attendance

The school takes the following steps to monitor pupil attendance and lateness:

- Telephoning parents on the first day of absence to find out where children are
- Contacting parents via text/ email if parents do not respond via phone
- Paying doorstep visits to parents to make sure children are being safeguarded and find out why they are not at school

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- Logging all interventions to do with attendance on each child's Arbor record
- Sending letters of concern about persistent absence (less than 90% per term) to parents relating this directly to how this is disadvantaging their child's learning
- Sending letters of lateness concern to parents relating this directly to how this is disadvantaging their child's learning
- Sending letters asking for medical evidence to parents
- Inviting parents to attendance meetings with the Pupil Family Support Worker/ FLO who can advise them on putting a routine in place.
- Referring attendance/ lateness concerns to the AAP
- Sharing attendance reports with the headteacher so persistent absenteeism and lateness across pupil groupings can be tracked and compared with national and local
- Prosecuting parents for poor school attendance in accordance with Medway's Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies

How the school promotes good attendance within the community

- Termly newsletters go out to all parents reminding them of how attendance directly affects their children's levels of achievement at school.
- The AAP service come into school to talk to the children in assembly and give them the message that to achieve well you have to attend well every day.

Statement of equality

This policy serves to ensure that all members of the All Saints family, whatever their background, disability, ethnicity, gender, learning difficulty, nationality, religion or sexual orientation are welcomed, dealt with fairly and are treated with dignity and respect.

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