

We are an ambitious and inclusive Trust of schools strengthening communities through excellent education.



# Attendance Policy

Responsibility for approval: TWT Senior Executive

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# Contents Page

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Policy statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 Scope and purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0 Definition</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.0 Legal framework</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5.0 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6.0 Aims</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7.0 Who is responsible for this policy?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>8.0 Responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9.0 Definitions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>10.0 Monitoring and reviewing attendance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>11.0 Reviewing this policy</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>12.0 Appendices</b>	<b>7</b>

## 1.0 Policy statement

1.1 We are an ambitious and inclusive Trust of schools, strengthening our communities through excellent education. We are committed to providing excellent education for every child, every day, and aim to strengthen and work with our communities to continue to improve attendance in our schools.

## 2.0 Scope and purpose

This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents and pupils.

The purpose of the policy is to outline the specify roles, responsibilities and actions required by everyone in order to continue to improve the attendance of all pupils in all of our schools.

## 3.0 Definition

3.1 This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents, and pupils. For the purpose of this document:

- the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust is referred to as **The Trust of Schools**,
- references to 'teachers' include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of pupils,
- references to 'pupils' include all learners in our school,
- references to 'school' refers to all education settings, regardless of type and
- we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the 'parent' of a pupil or young person as:
  - a. Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.
  - b. Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the pupil or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).
  - c. Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the pupil or young person i.e., a person with whom the pupil lives, irrespective of their relationship to the pupil.

## 4.0 Legal framework

4.1 This Policy will be published on the Trust's website and as a statutory policy will be included in the Trust's Policy Monitoring Schedule.

4.2 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 and parental responsibility measures.

4.3 These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- a. The Education Act (1996)
- b. The Education Act (2002)
- c. The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- d. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- e. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)
- f. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)
- g. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)

- h. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)
- i. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- j. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 5.0 Introduction

- 5.1 The Attendance Policy operates within the context of the school's mission and values. It is the aim of leaders to support every pupil to attend school each day in order to fulfil their academic and social potential.
- 5.2 To realise this aim, the school will work in partnership with parents / carers, the local authority, and outside agencies to offer pupils support in maintaining excellent attendance. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Improving attendance is everyone's business: effective communication and joined up working are paramount.
- 5.3 Excellent attendance is a pre-requisite of academic success. The school will ensure that parents are kept well-informed about the link between attendance and attainment and that when academic progress is jeopardised, this message is clearly reiterated, and support is offered to remove any existing or emerging barriers to attendance.
- 5.4 School leaders will ensure there is a calm, safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment where pupils want to be present and are eager and ready to learn.
- 5.5 The policy should be implemented alongside the Department for Education guidance document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.

## 6.0 Aims

- 6.1 To provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance and punctuality.
- 6.2 To ensure all stakeholders understand the school's expectations of themselves, and each other, in order to strive to attain them.
- 6.3 To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its schools.

## 7.0 Who is responsible for this policy?

- 7.1 The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory requirements. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the local governing body and Headteacher of each school.
- 7.2 The local governing body and senior leadership team at each trust school have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for fulfilling their roles and supporting to ensure its success.

## 8.0 Responsibilities

- 8.1 All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, *Education Act (1996)*). A pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at a school must, by law, attend regularly.

- 8.2 By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly. (Section 576, Education Act (1996)).
- 8.3 The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of school age.
- 8.4 By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the pupil will attend the school.
- 8.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- 8.6 By law, all schools must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all pupils, their personal details, (including at least three telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.
- 8.7 Pupils will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another school, move out of the area or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing pupils from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 6.
- 8.8 There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.
- 8.9 The school will communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, where relevant.
- 8.10 A roles and responsibilities framework is outlined in Appendix 3 to complement this policy. This defines agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, pupils and staff. This includes the new responsibility for our School Attendance Champion who is **Mark Barlow (Deputy Headteacher)**

## 9.0 Definitions

- 9.1 A pupil is classed as absent if they arrive after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.
- 9.2 An authorised absence is when approval has been given in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent for a specific (legal) purpose, or we have accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence from a parent or carer. This may include:
- a. an absence for illness for which we have granted leave,
  - b. medical or dental appointments may be granted leave where every attempt has been made to arrange outside of school hours, has been unsuccessful and so cannot be avoided, or where the appointment is a genuine emergency,
  - c. religious or cultural observances for which we have granted leave. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or pupil belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance and
  - d. an absence due to a change in exceptional circumstances.

9.3 An unauthorised absence is defined as one where we are not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Reasons may include:

- a. parents keeping children from attending unnecessarily or without reason,
- b. missing sessions before or during the school day,
- c. absences which have never been properly explained,
- d. arrival after the register has closed,
- e. day trips and holidays in term time and
- f. leaving school without authorisation during the school day.

9.4 Persistent absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

9.5 Severe absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

9.6 Persistent lateness is defined as pupils who have five or more late marks recorded in a single half-term.

## 10.0 Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

10.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality, daily and weekly throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

10.2 We set challenging attendance targets for the whole school.

10.3 Pupil-level absence data is collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We regularly compare our attendance data to the national average.

10.4 Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils. Data on attendance is collected and analysed a minimum of once per half term. Key analysis is made of the following:

- a. Patterns of absence
- b. Patterns of lateness
- c. Patterns of medical appointments
- d. Correct and consistent use of absence codes
- e. Trends in reasons for absence, for example, use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions
- f. Trends in particular groups of children for example, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

10.5 Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in the school development plan and future revisions of this policy.

10.6 The attendance data is reported to the Headteacher and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

10.7 Data will also be used by the school to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to improve attendance and to modify them and inform future strategies.

## 11.0 Reviewing this Policy

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the following circumstances:

- a. Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- b. As a result of any other significant change or event

c. If the policy is determined not to be effective

## 12.0 Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Key Personnel

Headteacher / Principal		Lindsay Skinner
Senior Attendance Champion		Mark Barlow
Office Attendance Manager		Amber Brooks
Governor responsible for attendance		Julie Skinner
Contact Details	Email	attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk
	Telephone	01392 209922

## Appendix 2 - Maintaining an Attendance Register

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (PM). It will mark whether each pupil is:

- present,
- attending an approved off-site educational activity,
- absent and
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstance.

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 and
- the name and position of the person making the amendment.

### Key Information.

- The school doors are open from: 8:25am. The school day starts at 8:35am. All pupils should be in their classroom at this time. The school day ends at 3:00pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday the day finishes at 4:00pm.
- The first (morning) registration session starts at 8.35am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 8:35am. The register closes at 9:35am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that the pupil is on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark.
- Pupils arriving late to school should report to the main school entrance and sign in via the electronic screen at reception.
- The second (afternoon) registration session starts at 12:00pm.
- If a pupil needs to leave school during the day, they must sign out at the main reception.
- Pupils educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site/alternative provision. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the pupil, and their parents to support the pupil to maintain good attendance.

### Recording Attendance

- The national absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the Census. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. See Appendix 4 for the DfE attendance codes.



- There will be no pre-population of codes and individual school tracking systems which monitor the whereabouts of pupils educated off-site, are robust and quality assured regularly.
- Where pupils are dual registered, or are taking part in other approved educational activities, the register will be updated following regular discussion and information sharing with the other establishment.
- **The Office Attendance Manager** will check the missing register report throughout the day and report any registers that have not been completed.

## Reporting Absence

- It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us of a pupil absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.
- Parents are expected to inform us of their pupil's absence before **8:30 a.m.** on each day of absence providing the reason for absence and when their child will be returning to school. We will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police.
- The school will always prioritise support over legal interventions. However, the school has a duty of care to inform parents that do not respond to the advice and support offered that the threshold for referral to the Education Welfare Service is 92% and the school will proceed with a referral should a child's attendance reach this level.

## Reasons for Absence

### Appointments

- As far as possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to us prior to the appointment.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the pupil's record. Should a pupil arrive late following an appointment, they should report to the school office / reception to be signed in.
- Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code.

### Religious Observance

- Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
- Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

### Illness

- In order to make informed decisions about their pupil's fitness for attending school, parents are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'Is My Child Too Ill for School?'. Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the **Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion** or member of staff delegated to carry out this task within the school.
- In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of a non-pupil day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence. However, this will only be requested if there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the

authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

- Where attendance is of a serious concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be notified of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is a serious concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'serious concern' may be defined as:  
repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or 3 x separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.
- Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:
  - a. medical card with one appointment entered with the pupil's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist,
  - b. letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant,
  - c. evidence of consultation with NHS 111,
  - d. medication prescribed by a GP,
  - e. copy of prescription,
  - f. print screen of medical notes / call logs and
  - g. evidence of a visit to a pharmacy.
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' **are not** required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

- In some cases, a pupil may be absent long term due to an illness or injury. We will liaise with families to ensure children return to school quickly and that there are no safeguarding concerns. On occasions where this is not possible, (and the section 19 threshold is met) we will make a referral to the Local Authority Medical Panel which provides educational opportunities for pupils who are unable to attend their regular school due to illness.

### **Traveller Pupils Travelling for Occupational Purposes**

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes covers Roma, English and Welsh Travellers, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Circus workers, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers), Showman 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 us, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. The aim for the attendance of Traveller students, in common with all other students, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act (1944), Section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e., 200 half days) in a year. It is important to note that this is only relevant when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is regularly attending school when that trade/business permits, following a request from parents (and the minimum 200 session criteria is met). It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller pupils is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable education when not at school.
- It is parent's responsibility to:
  - a. ensure that your child's ethnicity has been registered with the school. You can ask the school to correct this or update it,
  - b. ensure you tell your child's school ahead of time. 2 weeks' notice is useful,
  - c. ensure that your children attend as much school as possible,
  - d. ensure their child is accessing at least 100 days (200 sessions) of school in any 12-month period,
  - e. have regular contact with their child's school whilst travelling. Once a week is suggested,
  - f. support their child to complete the work set by schools whilst travelling and
  - g. if staying in a new area for a week or more, to register their child for a temporary place at any school – called 'dual registration'.
- It is the school's responsibility to:
  - a. allow Traveller pupils to travel with their parents for work purposes,
  - b. create work packs for their pupils to complete when away,
  - c. arrange times for at least a weekly 'check in' with the family. This can be through a call or email, d. contact the Local Authority if they have concerns,
  - e. mark pupil's work and provide valuable feedback and
  - f. ensure missed opportunities such as parents evening, vaccinations and careers advice are supported on the pupil's return.

### **Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

- Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or those who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.
- School will:

- a. work with parents to improve attendance, be mindful of the barrier's pupils face, make reasonable adjustments, and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. It is also expected that parents will engage with the support offered both internally and with external partners to ensure our children have all the support they need to thrive,
- b. encourage positive conversations so that a good support plan can put in place, including making reasonable adjustments,
- c. consider possible explanations for absence including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA),
- d. work with parents to consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support,
- e. ensure relevant referrals are made for pupils who are too ill to attend school, which may include medical panel (under section 19) and or medical agency support such as CAMHS,
- f. establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers this may include considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements and
- g. ensure joined up pastoral care is in place and consider whether a time-limited, closely monitored and reviewed, phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.

### Requesting Leave in Term Time

- Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the **Headteacher**, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional." Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted.
- The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: 'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'. Holidays during term time will not be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:
  - a. Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year, including weekends and school holidays. We will rightly prioritise attendance.
  - b. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the **Headteacher's** discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
  - c. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances. It is also acceptable for the **Headteacher** to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
  - d. We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.
  - e. We also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities.
- Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate, or in the best interests of the pupil to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The school routine can offer a safe and familiar environment during times of uncertainty. Relevant members of staff will work with parents to decide what is in the best interest of the pupil.

## Persistent and Severe Absence

- Pupils with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistent absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Pupils with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severe absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.
- All PA pupils will have bespoke action plans to try to improve their attendance to above 97%. This will be monitored by **the Senior Attendance Champion** with the support of **the Office Attendance Manager**.
- Pupils who are PA will be discussed as a potential concern at fortnightly attendance review meetings. Where pupils have an identified special educational need, the schools SENCO will also provide support, so that the impact of needs are clearly understood and appropriate, supportive actions are taken.
- The school's strategy for tackling persistent absence, can be found in **Appendix 7**.

## Following Up Absence and Taking Statutory Act

- We will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason. Any pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than one week will be referred to **the Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) and the **Headteacher**.
- Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of the unexplained absence and the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not. The school will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session has occurred.
- In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following the procedures for children missing in education, as outlined in the guidance document from the Department of Education.
- **Where it is appropriate, a member of staff may carry out a 'Return to School Meeting' to discuss the absence and to identify any support required.**
- It may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular pupil unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by the **Headteacher** or **Senior Attendance Champion** in consultation with the **DSL** and where relevant, the **SENCO**.
- It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child receives appropriate education. Failing to send a child to school regularly and without good reason is a criminal offence. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child, where the pupil is of compulsory school age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the **Headteacher**, in line with the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. In making the decision, they may consider:
  - a. the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year,
  - b. singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time and
  - c. where an excluded pupil is seen in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- **Issuing Penalty Notices:** each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

- **Taking Parents to Court for unauthorised absence:** The Education Act (1996) Section 444 (1) states that courts can fine each parent up to £1000 per pupil, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking Parents to Court for Persistent Unauthorised Absence:** The Education Act (1996) – Section 444 (1A) states that courts can fine each parent up to £2500 per pupil, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

### Children Missing from Education (CME)

- We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard pupils who are CME. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting pupils missing from education. [The DfE guide can be found here.](#)
- If a pupil fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff as to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/pupil, the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

### Attendance Causing Concern

- Specific measures to monitor attendance on a daily and weekly basis are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils through specific and tailored interventions. Ted Wragg Trust – Attendance Policy – Jan 2023Page 13 of 23
- St James School records and collects attendance data using our Data Management System, (Bromcom). We recognise that there are particular groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children who are defined as Pupil Premium, and pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing, regardless of these needs to ensure pupils continue to fully access their education.
- Staff make effective use of newsletters to report to parents the trends and patterns in attendance at a whole school level.
- Where attendance is deemed to be a concern, we will talk to pupils and parents. From this, there may be one of three initial outcomes: a. Initiate simple reasonable adjustments b. Develop a school focused plan with the pupil and their parent as appropriate (As per our Amber stage process) c. Initiate a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA)
- If the conversation with the pupil indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### Supporting the Attendance of Every Pupil

- We use a variety of strategies to encourage attendance:
  - a. Building strong and enduring relationships with our pupils so they feel a sense of belonging in our school community;
  - b. Verbal encouragement and praise for excellent and improved attendance;
  - c. Create personalised and achievable attendance targets for pupils, based on their medical needs and/or additional needs that is realistic and appropriate for each individual;
  - d. Create safe spaces for pupils to thrive;
  - e. Create opportunities for dialogue with families about attendance, ensuring that we work in partnership with parents;
  - f. Use different methods to encourage attendance; for instance, explaining the links between attendance and outcomes as well as social development;
  - g. Raise the profile of attendance with families, particularly when pupils start at the school;

- h. Teach and model a love of learning, helping families and pupils to see the value of the education that is offered to them;
  - i. Look at the effect on attendance of decisions made at school level, for instance term dates and the timing of non-pupil days;
  - j. Be aware of the complexity of different contexts and the pressures that families might experience, which may in turn contribute to poor attendance.
- We recognise that not all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, are able to achieve 100% attendance through no fault of their own. We celebrate improvements in attendance and contextualised good attendance for individual pupils.
  - Each pupil is supported and encouraged to achieve their individual highest possible attendance. Where applicable, pupil's will be provided with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound) individual targets for their attendance which will be reviewed regularly and include parental consultation where appropriate. Attendance effort awards will be awarded on a termly basis for pupils who have made a clear effort to improve or maintain their attendance and/or punctuality.
  - Our Behaviour Policy sets out the details of how we reward pupils for attendance and punctuality, and what sanctions we will apply for lateness.

### Ethnic Minority Pupils

- Pupil registration regulations states that absence should only be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.
- The following might be considered as exceptional circumstance for ethnic minority pupils:
  - a. Religious festivals: the school will authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival. For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.
  - b. Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
  - c. A close family wedding, if the dates cannot be made during school holidays. (one day only)
  - d. Illness or death of an immediate family member; the Headteacher will also consider the time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad under such circumstances
  - e. Child, parent/carer requires medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
  - f. Length of journey from abroad; the Headteacher will consider length of journey or limited regional flights.
  - g. Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.

- h. Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.
- i. Child, parent/ carer's visa has been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa. The duration will be considered in line with the expectations of the birth country.

### Appendix 3 – Framework of Responsibilities

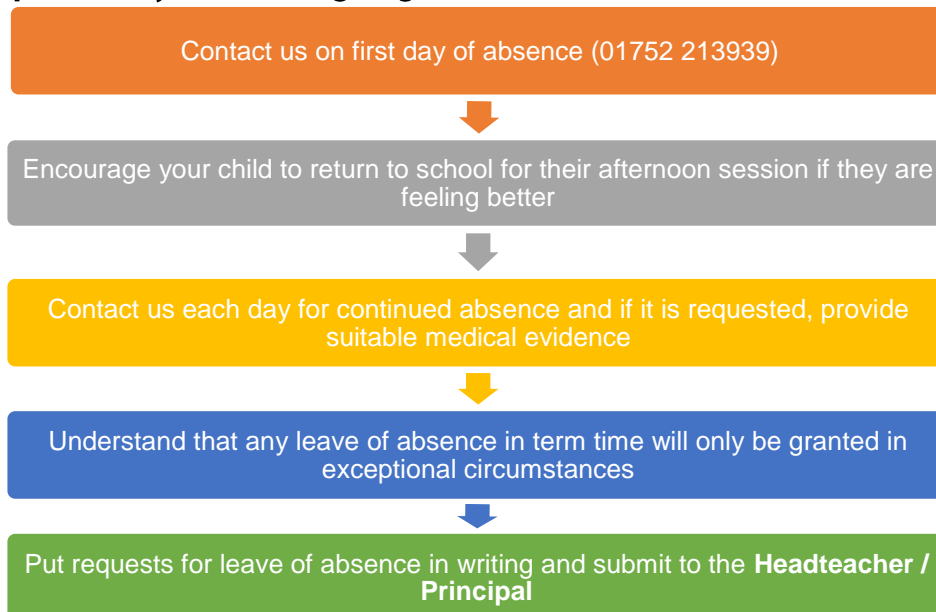
- The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, therefore, **St James** expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting excellent attendance at school.
- To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.
- Where a pupil or family need support with attendance, the best placed person in the school will support the family, this may or may not be the child's class teacher. This person should remain consistent, and the school will draw on positive relationships to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing.

#### Parents will:

- be aware that it is an offence for your child to be absent from school without a valid reason;
- be aware that only the school can determine if an absence is 'authorised';
- ensure your child / children arrives at school on time, dressed in full school uniform, ready and equipped to learn;
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- do everything you can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- inform the school if your child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected return date;
- work with the school and your child to address any in-school barriers to attendance and support their learning by taking an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that you child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that your child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance;
- provide the school with at least 3 emergency contacts for your child;
- provide proof of medical appointments that can only be attended during the school day;
- make early contact with the school when you become aware of problems with your child attending school;
- attend meetings if concerns have been identified;
- participate in Early Help / Team Around the Family Meetings if required;
- support and participate in attendance contracts where appropriate and,
- support in actioning agreed interventions/action plans and ensure your child attends all agreed interventions.



**Please follow this process if your child is going to be absent from school:**



**Pupils will:**

- aim to achieve excellent attendance (at least 97%) and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day;
- come to school well prepared and with a positive attitude; to enjoy and achieve;
- be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality;
- attend and be punctual to all lessons;
- commit fully to the attendance contract (if they are in place) and,
- talk about any concerns you have with a trusted adult in our school, especially if you are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on your attendance and/or learning.

**Support staff will:**

- understand that promoting pupil attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children and families say about their barriers to accessing education;
- assist in ensuring attendance has a high profile and importance within the school;
- build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness and absence with parents;
- follow up and be relentless with parents when no reason has been provided for an absence;
- complete return to school meetings with pupils when required and appropriate to your role;
- escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and,
- participate fully in training in relation to managing and improving pupil attendance.

**Teachers will:**

- understand that promoting pupil attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education;
- ensure attendance has a high profile within the class;
- consider whether a pupils' known, or not yet identified, SEN could be impacting on attendance and whether further reasonable adjustments should be made;
- take registers in a timely manner and when required;
- build a culture of challenge when addressing pupil absences with parents. Treat all pupils and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school;
- challenge parents when they do not provide a reason for absence;
- communicate with parents positively. Teachers should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Teachers should challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like (this is outlined in more detail in figure 1 below);
- escalate concerns as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- analyse and report attendance figures for each pupil to parents regularly;
- discuss attendance with parents at every opportunity (celebrate good and improving attendance, as well as concerning attendance) and,
- participate in training relating to attendance as appropriate

#### **Attendance Officer / Team will:**

- take calls / receive messages from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS system,
- offer support and guidance on attendance where needed,
- monitor and analyse attendance data and ensure key staff are kept informed,
- benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus and improvement,
- provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader and Governor responsible for attendance,
- monitor pupils with attendance below 97% through regular communication with both the pupil and their parents, holding attendance meetings where required and agreeing individual action plans,
- attend welfare checks / home visits where required,
- escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- work with Education Welfare Service to tackle persistent absence and
- advise the Headteacher / Principal and Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

#### **School Attendance Champion will:**

- take a lead in promoting pupil attendance across the school ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff,
- be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what pupils say about the barriers to accessing education,

- develop a clear strategy and vision for improving attendance,
- work with the SENCo, where relevant, to ensure any SEND needs are fully understood, including how these may impact on attendance, and to ensure that the provision in place meets needs of the child and supports good attendance,
- monitor daily attendance for vulnerable pupils and track weekly attendance patterns and trends for all pupils, providing opportunities for intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. (This needs to include patterns of attendance for individual pupils, cohorts, and groups but particularly for pupils with attendance below 92%),
- support all staff to monitor attendance patterns and tackle attendance concerns effectively by providing access to regular attendance reports to class teachers / tutors / subject or Key Stage leaders, so they are able to facilitate discussions with pupils (this also includes the SENCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and pupil premium leads),
- conduct a thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in the use of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects / classes which have low lesson attendance,
- work with the leadership team and the **School Attendance Governor** to benchmark the school's attendance data against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas for focus and improvement,
- monitor using the data, the impact of school wide and specific attendance strategies, ensuring there is regular and positive communication with parents,
- ensure attendance is a standing agenda item for every team meeting and use practice examples to explore themes and review relevant policy and practice,
- ensure there are return to school meetings where pupils have had 3 absences or more (where applicable),
- lead initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the school including a package of rewards for improving attendance, punctuality and overall excellent attendance, while not penalising pupils with complex medical or additional needs which impacts on their ability to attend school regularly,
- set annual school attendance targets with the **Headteacher**,
- work on proactively on building strong relationships with families,
- follow the EWS and Local Authority (LA) procedures and support staff to offer Early Help where necessary and work with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence,
- work with the LA, agencies, and safeguarding partners to overcome barriers to attendance,
- advise the **Headteacher** when to issue fixed-penalty notices,
- attend welfare / home visits where required,
- escalate concerns when deemed appropriate as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- lead attendance training for staff and governors and
- communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker (where applicable) or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, if applicable.

### **Senior Leadership Team will:**

- take a lead in promoting pupil attendance, ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what pupils say about the barriers to accessing education,
- ensure attendance has a high profile across the school,
- work proactively on building strong relationships with families,
- build a culture of supportive challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents,
- attend welfare / home visits where required,
- escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- liaise with the Attendance Champion, DSL, Behaviour Lead and SENCo as appropriate to discuss attendance concerns for individual pupils,
- participate in appropriate training in relation to attendance,
- ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and ensure that adequate, protected time is allocated for them to discharge their responsibilities and
- take overall responsibility for ensuring our school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance e.g., maintenance of the school register and deletion from school roll.

### **Headteacher will:**

- ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates excellent attendance and punctuality, ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff,
- be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what pupils say about the barriers to accessing education,
- monitor the school's offer to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to meet the needs of pupils,
- ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and punctuality policy throughout the school,
- ensure attendance is a target in performance appraisals,
- ensure attendance has a high profile across the school and with parents in all communications,
- monitor school level absence data with the School Attendance Champion and report attendance data to the Local Governing Board, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below),
- support all staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils,
- agree with the Attendance Champion when to issue fixed-penalty notices, • decide whether to grant leave during term time for exceptional circumstances and
- ensure attendance training is provided to staff annually.

### **Local Governing Board will:**

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies,
- review the implementation of the School Attendance Policy and ensure effective strategies are in place,
- ensure the school fulfils their statutory duties in relation to attendance,

- ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance on an annual basis,
- discuss the targets for attendance with the **Headteacher** and review progress towards these at Board meetings and
- regularly monitor attendance data through data analysis at Board meetings. Ask appropriate questions about attendance trends and be curious about what is being done to challenge and prevent persistent absence. **Figure 1:**

**There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are**

**175 non-school days a year**

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This represents the best chance of success for your child
97%	Secure Attendance	5	
95%	Improvement required	9	This represents less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress
90%	Attendance Concern (Persistent absence*)	19	
85%	<b>Serious Concern **</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Serious Concern</b> <b>Missing this much education will seriously limit your child's success and will result in legal action</b>

\*Persistent absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

\*\* Severe absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

## Appendix 4 – Attendance Codes

The following codes will be used and are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Present in school during the AM registration period (30min)
\	Present (pm)	Present in school during the PM registration period
L	Late Arrival	Pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered at another school	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or other 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 (for pupils in the final 2 years of compulsory school age)

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	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 (Only in exceptional circumstances)	Pupil has been authorised to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness (Not medical or dental appointment)	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 as outlined by the religious body
S	Study Leave	Year 11 pupil – once the default tuition of the exam syllabus is complete. Unsupervised
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling with their family for occupational purposes, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school or is in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason not yet 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 max of 5 days)
O	Absent without authorisation	Where no reason for the absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed and the school are not satisfied that the reason is an authorised absence
<b>Other</b>		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	E.g. School site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register has been set up but the pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday. Occasional days

## Appendix 5 – Creating a Positive Attendance Culture

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, therefore, **St James** expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting excellent attendance at School.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually, as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence.

For a positive attendance culture to be fully embedded across our school, it needs to be a holistic approach and is not seen in isolation. This will be achieved in our school by:

- A strong culture of challenging and supporting children to come to school and to value education;
- Improving the school experience for children and parents;
- Offering an enriching curriculum, instilling a sense of pride and enjoyment in attending school;
- A relaunch of our school values, increasing momentum, using a common language – this includes creating a positive relationship with families, enabling us to understand the underlying causes of absence.
- All parents receive regular attendance communication and ‘timely nudges’ e.g., via letters and phone calls;
- Ensure there is graduated follow-up for example, if there is no improvement quickly;
- Ensure that meetings are supportive and identify barriers, both in school and out of school;
- Educating the wider community about attendance, reaching out to a wide range of agencies to ensure there is the right support for children and families at the point of need;
- Ensuring a team of staff are well trained and are given the skills to confidently challenge parents when doing absence and attendance calls;
- Setting a high profile with staff working on attendance and include attendance as an appraisal target for all staff;
- Working with the Education Welfare Service / LA proactively to support poor attendance and not just for legal intervention.
- Use of a therapy dog in school
- Ensure vulnerable families are allocated a key worker e.g., SENDCO, lead for medical support, pupil premium champion, mental health and wellbeing lead, Inclusion Teacher etc.
- Utilise support available from external partners e.g., Early Help, School Attendance Team, SEMH, C&I, medical, inclusion, young carers network, social care.
- Use the Fast Track process and Fixed Penalty Notice’s as a last resort once families have been afforded plenty of opportunities to improve

## Appendix 6 – Removing a child from the school roll

### Elective Home Education (EHE):



- All of the relevant paperwork, including the safeguarding form will be submitted to the LA on the day of receiving the de-registration letter from the parent with a copy of the letter.
- The pupil will be taken off roll from the day the school receives the letter, or in cases where the parent is giving advance notice of the date requested, on the date requested.
- We cannot backdate this to an earlier date than receipt of the letter, even if the parent requests this.
- The school will confirm that the pupil has been registered with the LA as EHE to ensure that they have assumed responsibility for the pupil.

#### **Pupil Moves Out of Area:**

- Unreasonable distance to travel. We will submit the Statutory Notification as soon as we are made aware of the situation. We will then continue to track the pupil's destination and liaise with LA admissions team accordingly.
- The LA will advise the school when the pupil may be removed from roll. This is when it has been established that the pupil/family have left the last known address and their new location is known. The LA may also allow the school to backdate the leaving date if they or the school receives confirmation of the pupil starting at another school or within the care of a different LA.
- The school must receive written confirmation from the LA to backdate the leaving date. If the school does not receive this and the school has no other confirmation of where the pupil is, the school must keep them on roll for 20 days.

#### **Pupil Emigrates:**

- We will follow the same procedure as above for moving out of area, but we will also need to ascertain from the parent the forwarding address, details of destination school and moving date.

#### **Pupil Transfers to a New School:**

- We will confirm the pupil's start date at the new school and that the pupil has started there and then submit the Statutory Notification
- We can take the pupil off roll from the confirmed start date, or the last school day if it precedes it e.g., a Friday and they started on a Monday. If the start date is the first day of a school term we can backdate the leaving date to the last day of the previous term. If there is a gap between the leaving date the school has been given by a parent and the start date for a pupil, the pupil should remain on the school's roll, marked absent, until the transfer school confirms the pupil has started there. If after ten days, the pupil has still not started, the school should submit a CME form. We are not permitted to remove a CME pupil from the school's roll for a further ten days from the initial notification or safeguarding referral (so 20 days in total).