



Dear Families,

Attendance to school is vitally important for your child’s success. We at St James are working hard to increase attendance to improve the successes of our community.

We are writing to support your understanding of attendance.

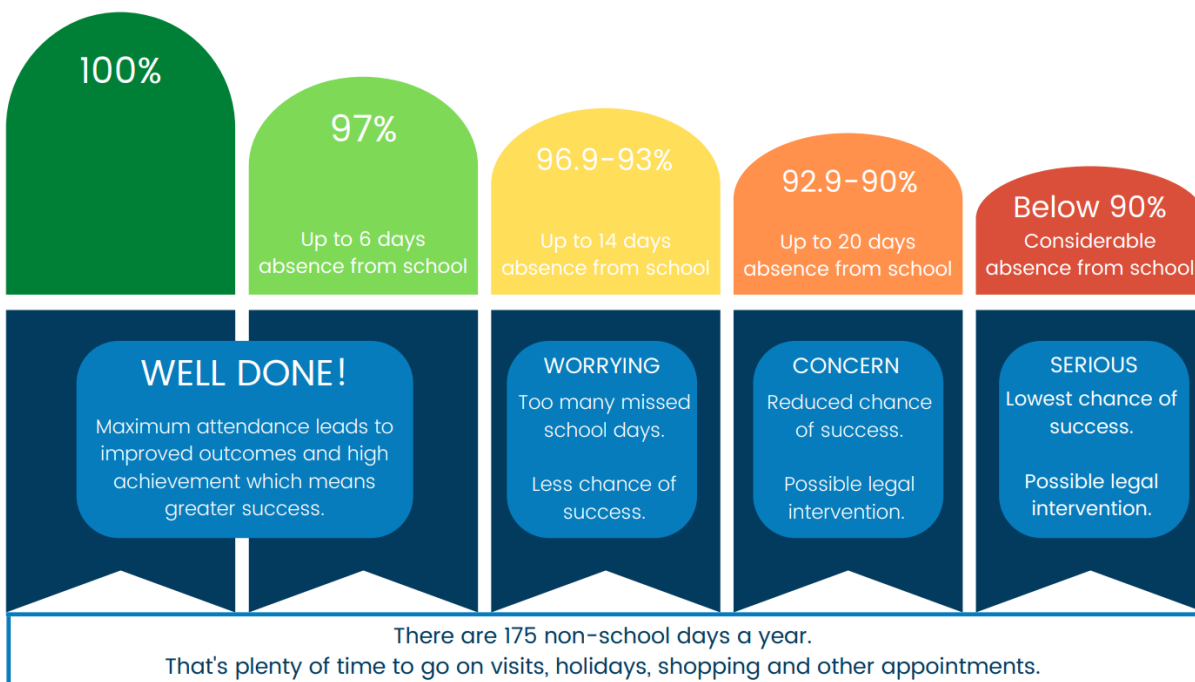
**Section One:** Understanding Thresholds

**Section Two:** Understanding Illness

**Section Three:** Understanding Absence Follow-up

**Why good attendance is important:**

- 90% attendance means a student misses half a day every week. Over five years, this results in half a school year missed.
- In one school year, attendance at 90% results in four whole weeks of school missed.
- Research shows that 17 missed school days in a year will result in at least one whole GCSE grade drop in achievement.





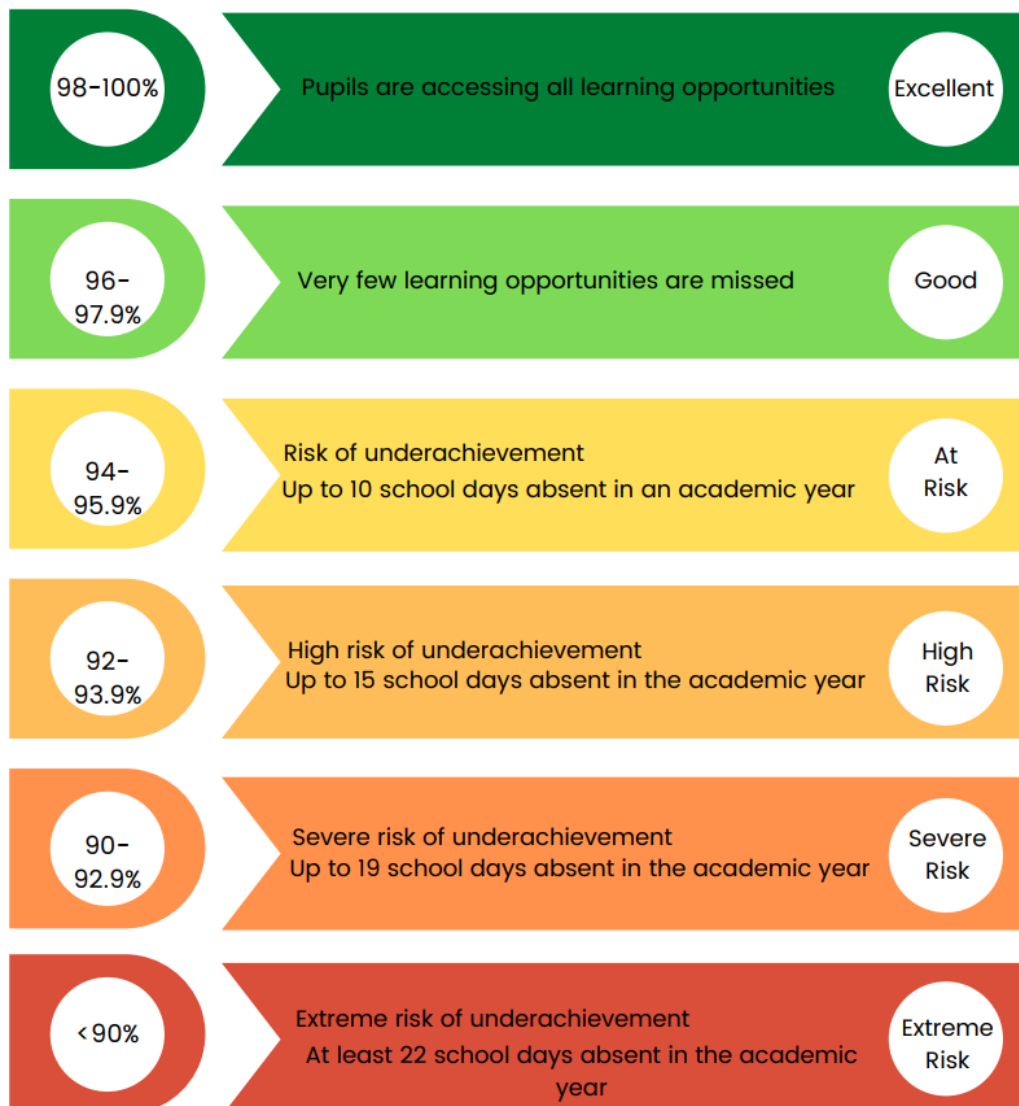
## Section 1: Understanding Thresholds

If your child drops below 97% attendance, we will be in contact to support you raising it.

Our first threshold layer (Green) involves the tutor giving support.

Our second threshold layer (Amber) involves the Head of Year meeting you to support.

Our final threshold layer (Red) involves moving to using our EWO (Education Welfare Officer) for support and possible prosecution.





## Section 2 Understanding Illness

As parents or carers it can be hard deciding if your child should stay off school or not due to their current state of health, and therefore we want to write to you to help clarify our expectations.

### Conditions that require time off from school:

- Sickness or diarrhoea – do not return to school until 48 hours after last episode
- Chickenpox – do not return until the scabs have crusted over (usually five days)
- Impetigo – children can return to school 48 hours after they start antibiotics
- Scarlet Fever – children can return to school 24 hours after they start antibiotics
- Fever – a high temperature is 38C or more.
- Influenza (flu) – until recovered
- Infections needing isolation period cited in <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
- A positive Covid19 test - The advice for children is to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days.

### Conditions that DO NOT require time off from school:

- Coughs and colds – encourage your child to dispose of used tissues and wash their hands.
- Conjunctivitis – no reason to stay away, seek advice from GP or Pharmacist
- Head lice – treatments available over the counter and inform school that your child has been treated.
- Sore throat – no reason to stay off school

- Only school can authorise an absence.
- Parents/ carers need to contact the school if their child is unwell so that we can inform staff of their absence.
- There may be occasions where medical evidence is needed to support an extended period of absence or frequent absences.
- Absence requests should be completed on the school website and evidence sent to [attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk)

### Top tips

- You can make sure that you have given paracetamol consent on Bromcom, so that we give paracetamol to your child during the school day, if necessary.
- Medical appointments should be made outside of the school day, wherever possible.
- If a medical appointment must be during the school day, please arrange the appointment for 2pm onwards to ensure students do not miss large parts of the school day.
- Please provide medical evidence in order to get the absence authorised



## Understanding Absence Follow-up

As a school, we need to ensure that parents know the way to report a student absence and the follow-up that will take place following the child's absence.

### Reporting a Student Absence

This information can also be found on the school website:

If students are absent from school, it is essential that parents/carers *email* the school on [attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk) or complete the *online absence form* to let us know the reason for the absence. Parents must contact the school for every day their child is absent. Online form: <https://forms.office.com/e/DszyjmGYE>

Please also email [attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk) if you have any medical evidence you wish to provide to authorise an absence.

### Medical Appointments

If your child has an unavoidable appointment during the school day, please email in the letter or appointment card to [attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stjamesexeter.co.uk). Where possible, we would ask that appointments be made out of school hours so your child's learning is not disrupted, especially during assessment periods. Non-essential appointments will be unauthorised.

### Absence Follow-Up

To further enhance our student welfare, we are adapting our absence follow-up slightly from this half term.

Day	Follow-Up
On day 1 of absence	A text message will be sent to you.
On day 2 of absence	A text message will be sent to you. <b>AND a phone call</b> will made home.
On day 3 of absence	A text message will be sent to you. <b>AND a home visit</b> will made home

\*adaptations maybe made, based upon the discretion of the school.

### Absence Request

Absence during term time will not be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances and if permission is sought in advance. If you would like to request an absence for you child, then complete the online form using the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/33HF7jFjwy>

## **Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time**

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 came in to force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in 'exceptional circumstances'.

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

This school will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the schools responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 190 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances).

Thank you for your anticipated support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Barlow', written in a cursive style.

Mark Barlow

Deputy Headteacher