



# St James' C of E Junior School

*'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path' ~ Psalm 119 v 105*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### 2026

Relevant roles held and by whom (correct at the time of publishing)	
Safeguarding/Attendance Link Governor(s):	Kerry Lunn
School Attendance Officer:	Julie Hutchinson
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Alex Moore

Approved by <sup>1</sup>	
Name:	Alex Moore
Position:	Head teacher
Signed:	<i>AMoore</i>
Date:	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Proposed review date <sup>2</sup> :	January 2027

## REVIEW SHEET

Each entry in the table below summarises the changes to this Policy and procedures made since the last review (if any).

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Complete rewrite following publication of Cumberland Attendance strategy	January 2026

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Aims.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Legislation and guidance.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Roles and responsibilities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.2 The attendance officer.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.3 Form tutors and Class Teachers.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.4 School Admin staff .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.5 Parents .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.6 Pupils.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.7 Attendance Staff Team .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Recording attendance.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.1 Attendance register .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.2 Unplanned absence .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.3 Planned absence .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.4 Lateness and punctuality .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.5 Following up unexplained absence.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.6 Reporting to parents .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.1 Approval for term-time absence .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.2 Enforcement .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7. 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school .....</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance .....	11
<b>7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND. ....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence. ....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Attendance monitoring.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8.1 Reducing persistent and severe absence. ....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9. Monitoring arrangements.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>10. Links with other policies .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Additional Links .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*, and *Cumberland Council's School Attendance Strategy* through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

We expect all children to attend their scheduled sessions regularly and punctually. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's attendance. If a child is unable to attend, parents must notify us as soon as possible.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024* and school attendance *Parental Responsibility Measures 2023*. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

Further information can be found on Cumberland Council Attendance Handbook page 4, and the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*

### 3.1 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Attendance Lead') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Consulting with pupils, parents/carers, and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The **designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Alex Moore** and can be contacted via **amoore@stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk**.

### 3.2 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with colleagues to tackle persistent absence.

The attendance officer is **Julie Hutchinson** and can be contacted at **admin@stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk**.

### 3.3 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions and lesson attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This must be completed immediately and within the first 5 minutes of registration.

### 3.4 School Admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Ensure all parents addresses/contact details are up to date.
- Consider referral to support services and or an Early help assessment.

### 3.5 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

1. All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
2. All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
3. Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and ensure they are up to date.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Keep to any attendance action plans that they make with the school and/or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's Attendance Officer

### 3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
- Attend every timetabled session, on time.

### 3.7 Attendance Staff Team

Attendance Lead (Headteacher)	<b>Alex Moore</b>
Attendance Officer	<b>Julie Hutchinson</b>
Designated Safeguarding Lead	<b>Alex Moore</b>
SENCO	<b>Victoria Pickering</b>

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 DfE *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024* for the full list of attendance codes or refer to pages 27-31 on Cumberland Council Attendance Handbook.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. The school day starts at **8.45am** and ends at **3.15pm**. Pupils must arrive in school by **8.45am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.00am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.10pm** and will be kept open until **1.15pm**.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01946 695311 or by emailing [admin@stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk).

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a medical prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

GP fit for work notes for children are not acceptable.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents 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.

For any planned absences, parents must complete an absence request form. These can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website. This should be completed and submitted at least 2 weeks before the absence is due to take place.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Persistent lateness will trigger further intervention, including letters home and meetings with teachers/attendance officer.

Those who are late after registration closes and therefore absent will follow the same path as any other unauthorised absence and contributes to the 10-sessions of absence over 10 weeks national threshold.

#### **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 the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit and contact any outside agencies who may be involved with the family.
- Identify whether the absence is approved 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(s) for which the pupil was absent.

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will refer to the Local Authority.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at least once a half term. This will be through messages, emails and termly data reports.

Attendance is tracked on a weekly basis and any children classified as persistent absentees (below 90%) or those children who are below 92% and approaching the persistent absentee category, will receive a letter/email home to parents accordingly (see flowchart). These children will continue to be monitored/parents contacted in line with the flowchart until attendance is above 90%.

At the end of each term, children will be grouped into 5 RAG rated bands.

**Well done (Upper Green – 100%)**

**Well done (Green – 99.99-96%)**

**Upper Amber (95.9 – 92%)**

**Lower Amber (91.9-90%)**

**Red school attendance notification – (Below 90%)**

RAGG – rated letters will be sent out to all parents stating current attendance percentages and further actions needed. It will be explained to parents who receive 'Red Letters' that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them and further attendance panel meetings will be arranged.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited transition timetable (part time timetable).
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unexpected or unavoidable events.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

***As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.***

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or central office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Romani people, 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.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

For further information on specific codes refer to pages 26-31 of Cumberland Councils Attendance Handbook.

## **5.2 Enforcement**

Our school will make use of the full range of potential enforcements. Refer to page 18-25 of Cumberland Council Attendance Handbook. *\*\*Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.*

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Good attendance and improved attendance are rewarded at St James' CofE Junior School. We do this by:

- Celebrating attendance every week during Collective Worship
- Celebrating good attendance in assembly a least once a half term

The school will work collaboratively with the Access and Inclusion Team at Cumberland Council to help to support pupils and parents in achieving good attendance.

## **7. 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school**

### **7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance**

We work particularly closely with pupils and parents where there are more complex barriers to attendance. If a child is struggling or refusing to attend school, parents should inform us immediately.

To support more complex barriers to attendance we:

- Will invite the parent and pupil into school for a meeting.
- If the pupil cannot/will not attend a meeting at school, we will visit the family home.
- Depending on the barriers identified, the child's tutor/teacher will be informed and be part of any reintegration plans.
- Consider temporary transition timetables. Depending on need, the aim of these is always for students to be back in school full time as quickly as possible, however we recognise that this can support a phased return into school.
- Arrange for temporary pick-ups in the morning by one of our pastoral leads.

### **7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND.**

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority. Reasonable adjustments can be made to support students in school.

Where there is a prolonged physical or mental illness, the Access and Inclusion Team at the Local Authority will be requested to support with education.

### **7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.**

To support a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence attendance we:

- Will invite the parent and pupil into school for a meeting or attend the family home.
- Consider temporary transition timetables. Depending on need, the aim of these is always for students to be back in school full time as quickly as possible, however we recognise that a pupil may need a phased return into school. This will be in communication with Form Tutor and Head of Year/Manager who will also support with the return to school.
- Arrange for temporary pick-ups in the morning by one of our pastoral leads.

## 8. Attendance monitoring

The school analyses attendance data at least once a week. This includes punctuality. The attendance team meet weekly to discuss attendance and consider next steps for those pupils where attendance is decreasing.

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Refer to page 8 in Cumberland Council Attendance handbook.

### 8.1 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with *DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
  - Explain the help that is available.
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
  - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Communicate with parents via text, email, phone call or letters to inform them of attendance updates.
- Visit the family home to communicate and meet with parents.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement enforcements, where necessary

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by **ATTENDANCE LEAD**, Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Additional Links

[Supporting attendance | EEF](#)

<https://thehub.naht.org.uk/management/guidance-on-authorised-term-time-pupil-absence/>



## **St James' C of E Junior School**

### **First Response Procedure – Child Missing from Registration**

1. 9.00 a.m. Registers saved on MIS system.
2. 9.10 a.m. Answerphone/absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked
3. 9.10 a.m. Daily Check carried out in office
4. By 9.30 a.m. Call to be made to first name on contact asking for absence reason.
5. 9.30 a.m. Headteacher to be notified of any absence of a child on the persistent absence list
6. 9.45 a.m. If no response, start calling additional names on contact list
7. Ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted
8. 10.00 a.m. If no reply send text and email to first and second contacts on list
9. 10.00 a.m. Alert HT/DSL that child is absent and no contact has been made within an hour of school start time
10. Home Visit made if possible/appropriate by school or other agency involved.
11. Contact Police if all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child. This should be done using the 101 number.



Wellington Row, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7HG

t: 01946 695311

e: admin@stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk w: stjamesjun.cumbria.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Beattie



## REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FORM

- Please note that from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 all absences from school, other than for illness, must be notified to the school via this form. Any absences without a completed form will be recorded as unauthorised.
- For all illness notifications the school must be contacted using the procedures in the school attendance policy.

### Good School Attendance

We believe that if pupils are to benefit fully 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.

For an absence to be authorised, it must not be one which cannot be reasonably scheduled for outside of school hours/term time and/or it must meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. More comprehensive details about unauthorised/authorised absence can be found in our school attendance policy, and we encourage parent/s to consult the policy when making a request for an absence from school. Guidance on the government website can also be consulted 'Working together to improve school attendance – August 2024' which details the most up to date guidance framework schools must follow. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

### Term-time Holidays

As you will be aware, Government Guidance advises that schools should not authorise requests for term time absence unless the school has received suitable evidence of exceptional circumstances. The Government does not consider a family holiday to be an exceptional circumstance.

You need to request a leave of absence by completing the form on the reverse of this notification. If the leave of absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised leave.

**I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you still choose to take your child out of school unauthorised, then the school must inform the absence to the Local Authority Attendance Team. The Education Act 1996 states that parents can be prosecuted if their child is not attending regularly and if you have parental responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following:**

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a **fixed penalty notice**. The amount is £80 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £160 (per parent per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. If a previous penalty notice has been issued the Local Authority may decide to proceed directly to **prosecution**.

Please complete and return the form on the reverse to the school office.

Best Regards  
Mr A Beattie, Head teacher  
St James' Junior School

"with exploring minds, and faith; we grow and learn together"

**REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FORM**

PUPIL'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

**Requested dates for leave of absence during school time:**

Date from (first day of absence): ..... a.m. or p.m.

Date to (last day of absence): ..... a.m. or p.m.

Number of school days your child will be absent: .....

**Reason for absence** (please indicate why the above pupil will be absent from school) –Medical/Dental Appointment  Please indicate the name of the hospital/medical establishment and the time of appointment \_\_\_\_\_Secondary School Visit  Please indicate school name \_\_\_\_\_Other reason  Please explain the reason for the absence and any exceptional circumstances to support the absence request:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**In making this request I/we can confirm that I/we have read and understood the information overleaf about requesting an absence from school in term time.** Name(s) of Parent/Carer(s) making request:

Forename \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Forename \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please ensure you are giving at least 7 days' notice of the proposed absence; retrospective applications cannot be authorised)*You will be notified via email whether this absence will be authorised/unauthorised, please indicate your email address (if different to the one we normally contact you on):  
\_\_\_\_\_

<b>(FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY)</b>			
Date Received			
Pupils Current Attendance:		Previous Absence Concerns?	YES NO
Additional Information			
Unauthorised or Authorised (please circle accordingly):	UNAUTHORISED	AUTHORISED	
Signed by Head Teacher/Manager			
Date Parents Notified via Email & Registers Updated			
Details of Further action			

## **TYPICAL UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE RESPONSE (USUALLY EMAILED)**

Good Morning,

Thank you for submitting a Leave of Absence in Term Time form. Due to the circumstances and reasons for this request, we can inform you that the absence has been unauthorised and the registers have been updated accordingly.

As detailed on the absence form, I am unable to authorise family holidays, except in the most exceptional of circumstances, however it is still important for the office to know when children are off, so thank you for completing the form and returning it.

In order to be fully transparent with families, we would like to explain that the local authority have a responsibility to track the amount of school time due to term-time absence. Each term they ask me to provide details on which children have taken holidays and for how many days they have been absent due to this holiday. Together with a combined poor attendance record and proof of previous incidents of taking holidays during term time could result in families receiving fixed-penalty notices.

This latest absence is the \*\* incident of holidays taken during term time since your child started at St James'. I must therefore be clear that it is likely that subsequent term-time holidays will result in a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.

### **CUMBERLAND COUNCIL GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **i) What is regular school attendance?**

- Attending school everyday unless there is a very good reason for absence.
- Getting to school on time.
- Being present at school for both morning and afternoon sessions.

#### **ii) Children who attend school regularly are more likely to:**

- Keep up with school work.
- Develop good habits and important life skills.
- Maintain friendships.
- Gain better qualifications.
- Have access to a wider range of opportunities when they leave school.
- Stay away from harm.

#### **iii) What does the law say about parental duty concerning children's education?**

- Parents must make sure that their children receive efficient full time education in school or elsewhere.
- Once a child is registered at school, the parent must make sure that the child attends regularly.
- Parents should inform the school of the reasons for any unavoidable absence on the first day.
- Parents may request term time absence only in special or exceptional circumstances; this should be made in writing to the head teacher.

- Giving as much notice as possible.

#### iv) At what age do children have to start school and when can they leave?

Children must receive full-time education from the **start of the school term after their fifth birthday** until the **end of June in the school year in which they turn 16**.

#### v) What is unauthorised absence?

Only the headteacher can decide if the reason given for absence is acceptable. If the head teacher decides that the reason given for absence is unacceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised.

#### vi) Parents can face legal and financial sanctions if their child fails to attend school

- Fixed Penalty Notices to the amount of £ 120, this amount will reduce to £ 60 if paid within 21 days.
- An Education Supervision Order issued by the family court.
- Prosecution in a Magistrates' court.

### EXAMPLE RAGG LETTER WORDING

Educational research conducted by the Department for Education tells us that children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- Build a firm and secure knowledge and understanding across all curriculum subjects.
- Ensure they consistently meet and build upon expectations for their age group.
- Develop good habits, maintain friendships and important life skills.
- Gain better qualifications and have access to a wider range of opportunities when they leave school.

At St James' C of E Junior School we are committed to providing a safe and exciting learning environment and raising children and young people's school attendance to ensure they have the opportunity to get the best from their education and a good start in life. For more information about our Attendance Policy and procedures, please visit our school website or the school office.

Our whole school attendance target is 96%. Each term, you will receive a RAG letter (Red, lower Amber, upper Amber, lower Green, or upper Green) to highlight your child's individual percentage of attendance.

#### Well done (Upper Green – 100%)

I am very pleased to tell you that [[firstname]]'s attendance this year so far is 100%, which is an excellent achievement. Congratulations and thank you for your strong support on school attendance. Please share with [[firstname]] how pleased we are and encourage them to keep up the good work so we can send another "Green" letter next term.

### **Well done (Green – 99.99-96%)**

I am very pleased to tell you that [[firstname]]'s attendance this school year so far is [[percent]], which is an excellent achievement. Congratulations and thank you for your strong support on school attendance. Please share with [[firstname]] how pleased we are and encourage them to keep up the good work aiming for 100% so we can send another "Green" letter next term.

### **Upper Amber (95.9 – 92%)**

[[firstname]]'s attendance for this school year so far is [[percent]]%, which is below our school target set for all pupils. We understand that childhood illnesses and other exceptional family circumstances can be unpredictable and unavoidable, and we appreciate it when you let us know promptly that your child will be absent from school, however, we would ask you to encourage your child to aim for full attendance for the rest of the year. We monitor attendance on a weekly basis and ask for the support of all parents and carers in helping children achieve their attendance targets. We are keen to work with families to address school attendance issues in partnership together.

### **Lower Amber (91.9-90%)**

[[firstname]]'s attendance so far this school year is [[percent]]%, which is below our school target set for all pupils. This is very close to the Red category (attendance of 90% or lower) which is well below our whole school attendance target and would raise concerns about persistent absenteeism.

We understand that childhood illnesses and other exceptional family circumstances can be unpredictable and unavoidable, and we appreciate it when you let us know promptly that your child will be absent from school. However, we are becoming concerned about the amount of learning and time with their peers that your child is missing so, we would ask you to encourage your child to aim for 100% attendance for the next term. This will ensure they do not fall into the Red category, where concerns may need to be raised formally.

We monitor attendance on a weekly basis and ask for the support of all parents and carers in helping children achieve their attendance targets. We are keen to work with families to address school attendance issues in partnership together.

### **Red school attendance notification – (Below 90%)**

[[firstname]]'s attendance this year so far is [[percent]]%, which is well below our school target set for all pupils and raises concerns about persistent absenteeism.

We appreciate that [[firstname]]'s high rate of absence from school has been due to [unforeseen/repeated/ongoing illness/health/medical issues/another exceptional family circumstances which may need stating] and we will continue to work with you and your child to ensure their low school attendance has the minimum impact we can achieve on their learning and wellbeing.

## **EXAMPLE LETTER WORDING FOR EXCESSIVE BOUTS OF ABSENCE OR UNUSUAL PATTERNS OF ABSENCE**

### *Excessive Bouts of Absence –*

Upon a regular review of attendance, absence records show that whilst your child's attendance currently stands at \*\*%, he/she has so far this school year, had 5 bouts of

absence. Whilst we appreciate that childhood illnesses are unpredictable and there is no specific threshold for what acceptable or normal for one child compared to another, it is our policy to contact parents at this stage to ensure that you are mindful of further absence now that we have made you aware of the situation. If there is a specific medical reason for the absences, which we are not aware of, then we would encourage you to speak to us so that we may better understand the pattern of absences. We will continue to monitor attendance, and as such, it is our policy to not authorise any further illness absence without medical proof. Thank you for your understanding.

*Unusual Patterns of Absence –*

Upon a regular review of attendance, absence records show that whilst your child's attendance currently stands at \*\*%, we have identified an unusual pattern to absences which we wanted to make you aware of. The pattern is \*\*\*\*\* (include relevant details about the absence pattern). Whilst we appreciate that childhood illnesses are unpredictable, it is our policy to contact parents at this stage to ensure that you are mindful of further absence now that we have made you aware of the situation. If there is a specific medical reason for the absences, which we are not aware of, then we would encourage you to speak to us so that we may better understand the pattern of absences. We will continue to monitor attendance, and as such, it is our policy to not authorise any further illness absence without medical proof. Thank you for your understanding.

**1.1 St James C of E Junior School**

**Attendance Action Plan**

**DATE OF ACTION PLAN:**  
To run for 4 weeks from  
% attendance for year – 85.2%

**Date of review –**  
% attendance at review -

**STUDENT:**

**D.O.B:**

**CONCERN:** Currently Persistent absent. 8 separate bouts of absence this year. 1 bout of holiday taken during term time.

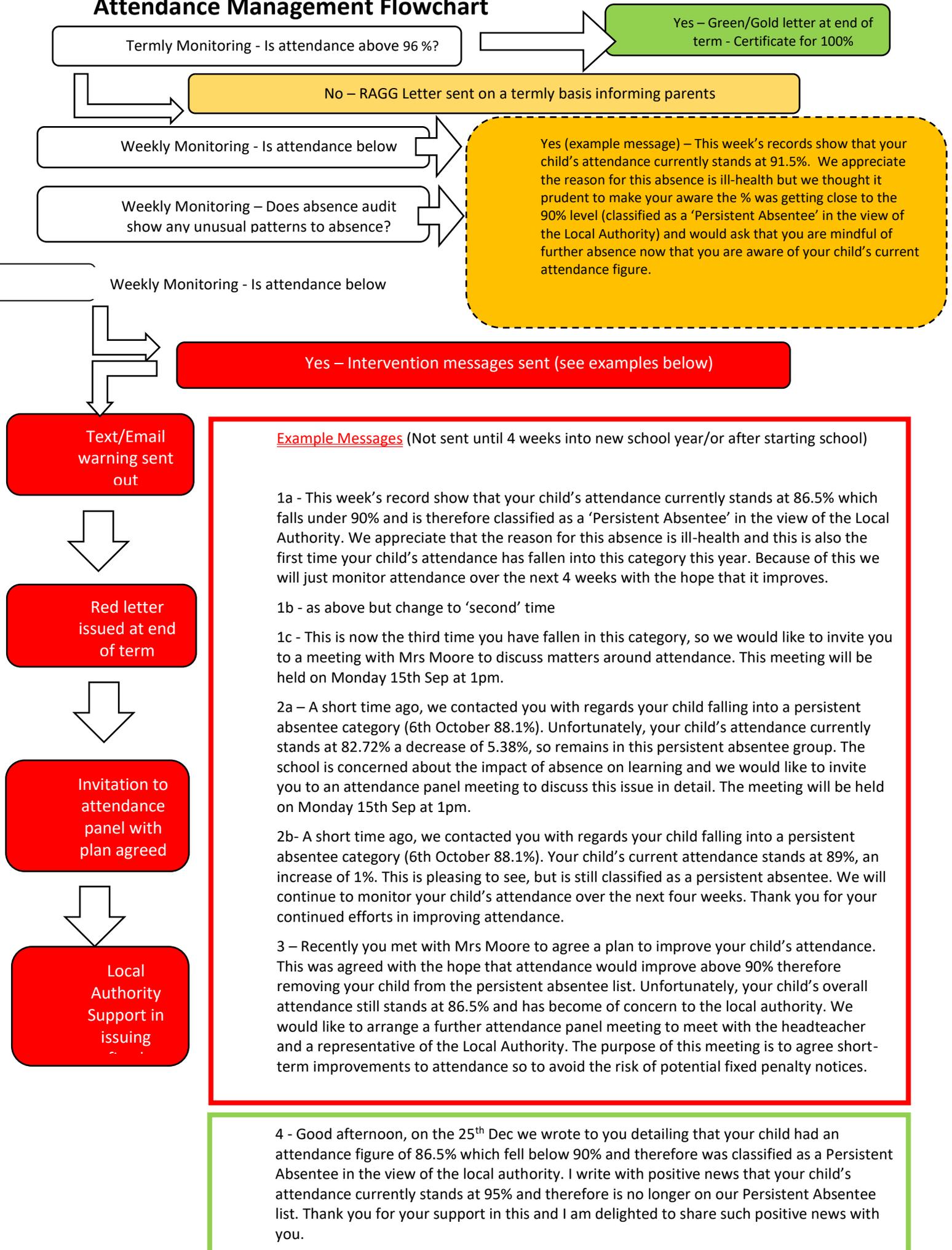
**% ATTENDANCE:** 85.2                      **Target - 90% in next 12 weeks. (17<sup>th</sup> June)**

**AIM: To increase attendance**

AGREEMENT	ACTION	TIMESCALE	OUTCOME - Completed in review ****
<b>PUPIL</b>	To attend school every day on time. To speak to someone in school if there are any difficulties.	Immediately	
<b>PARENT/CARER</b>	To encourage and ensure **** attends school every day. **** needs to attend school on time. To contact school on 1 <sup>st</sup> day of every absence before 9 a.m. To provide medical support for all absences. This can be a doctors note, appointment card or letter, copy of a prescription or sight of medication showing date prescribed and child's name, screen shot from the doctors computer detailing the visit. To attend all meetings and respond to calls and texts. To not have further holiday taken during term time.	Immediately Immediately As required As required  As required Immediately	

<p><b>SCHOOL</b></p>	<p>To support ***** in school          If ***** is absent and there is no contact from home by <b>9.15</b> a.m. school to ring to ascertain reason. A home visit may be undertaken if deemed necessary.          School to keep accurate attendance records.          School to only authorise absence when there is confirmation that there was a genuine reason for absence from medical personnel.</p>	<p>Immediately          Immediately          Immediately</p>	
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>			

# Attendance Management Flowchart



## **17. Dropping off and picking up before and after school**

(Based on KAHSC v1)

### **Safeguarding policies and procedures**

Schools have a duty to safeguard children in their care. An important part of this is considering how to ensure that pupils arrive and leave premises safely.

The following information details our policies and procedures about children being dropped off and collected to and from the school site, as part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities. These policies and procedures reflect the age of our pupils.

This policy is shared with parents and carers when a child joins the school and we will ask parents and carers to acknowledge that they have understood the policy and agree to follow it when they complete admissions forms upon entrance to the school.

### **Who is dropping off and who is picking up children?**

A vital part of keeping children safe is ensuring the school knows who is responsible for dropping off and picking up a child.

### **Gathering information from parents or carers**

On enrolment to the school, we ask parents and carers to provide the following information for each child:

- the names and full addresses of parents and carers (including confirmation of parental responsibility or private fostering arrangements and any relevant paperwork)
- home, work and mobile phone numbers
- email addresses where appropriate
- two authorised adult contacts who may be called in the event of the parents or carers being unobtainable or in the case of an emergency
- information about any person who has been denied legal access to the child (with copies of any relevant legal documents).

The school uses a secure system to store this information and update it on an annual basis.

### **Children travelling to and from school without adult supervision**

As a school, we advise parents and carers with children in Year 3 and 4 to make sure they are accompanied by an adult. Children in Year 5 and 6 may enter and leave the site without adult supervision, but only once we have received notification from parents/carers that this is what they want to happen.

There is no law that states what age children may travel to and from school unsupervised.

Parents and carers should make their decision based on their child's maturity, ability and the safety and distance of the route to school. To help parents and carers decide whether their child is ready to either stay at home or go out alone NSPCC have the following guidance - [Home or out alone guide](#).

### **Older siblings accompanying a child to or from school on a parent or carer's behalf**

There is no law determining the age at which a sibling can accompany a child to school. It is ultimately up to parents and carers to decide whether they feel this is appropriate.

Factors that parents and carers should take into account include:

- the maturity of all the children involved;

- the length and nature of the journey home;
- the behaviour of all the children involved;
- the relationship between the children collecting or being collected.

As a school, we prefer not to send a child home with a sibling unless the sibling is aged 14 or older.

## **vii) What happens with late pick-ups, or if no one turns up?**

Being late for pick up or not turning up at all can be a cause for concern, so procedures are in place to deal with this.

### **What happens if parents or carers are late to collect their child?**

#### **Late Collection Procedure**

In the event of lateness for collection the school will:

- contact parents or carers;
- call emergency contacts if parents and carers cannot be reached so an authorised adult can come and collect the child;
- keep records of late collections;
- after 3.30 p.m. children will be put into the schools after-school club for safety until they are collected (and maybe charged for this service – usually not until the second instance of lateness).

If parents and carers have authorised someone else to collect the child, they may not always be aware the child is being collected late, so it's important we keep them informed if this happens.

In the case of persistent lateness, the school will contact parents or carers outlining possible concerns and record such as a possible safeguarding concern using the school's safeguarding procedures.

### **What happens if parents and carers cannot collect the child?**

If parents, carers or other authorised people are not able to collect the child and have arranged for someone else to come instead, the parents or carers must notify the school as soon as possible.

If nobody comes to collect the child (after 5.15 p.m.), the school will make every effort to contact the parents, carers or authorised person whose details have been supplied. Until the child is collected, they should stay at school in the care members of staff who have undergone the appropriate vetting and barring checks.

School staff will never:

- take the child home with them
- transport the child home
- go in search of parents/carers.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a full written report of an incidents of lateness past 5.15 p.m. This report should be added to the child's safeguarding file. If appropriate, this report should also be shared with children's social care.

Unless contacted or arrangements agreed between the school and parents, after 5.45 p.m. the school will apply child protection procedures and contact children's social care.

### **What happens if someone else comes to collect a child?**

As a school, we will not allow children to go with any unauthorised person without first getting permission from parents or carers.

If a child's social worker is planning to collect them from school, this should be agreed in advance by the child's parents and carers.

If an unauthorised person arrives to collect the child, the school will contact the child's legal guardian. If the school is unable to make contact with the child's legal guardian, or the legal guardian does not give their permission, the school will explain that they are unable to release the child to anyone else without authorisation from the child's legal guardian.

If an unauthorised person refuses to leave the premises, becomes aggressive or violent or attempts an unauthorised removal of the child then it may be necessary to contact the police. This should be recorded as a safeguarding concern using the school's usual safeguarding procedures.

### **viii) Who else needs to be involved?**

Sometimes other external organisations are involved in drop off or pick up from school.

#### **Activities on school premises**

The school's procedures for dropping off and collecting pupils applies to after school clubs on the school premises.

When the school allows other organisations for activities or events, such as Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project, we ensure that we ask them to share their safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures with you and check that these are adequate.

### **ix) What else do we need to consider?**

Other Important Policies (which should be read in conjunction with this policy) –

- Child Protection Policy
- Overarching Safeguarding Statement
- Whole School Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- School Traffic Management Plan 2023
- Complaints Procedure
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Vetting Policy Procedures
- Equality Policy