PSJP15

St John's Primary School

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Governors	**Date:**	Autumn 2026
Last reviewed on:	Autumn 2026		
Next review due by:	Autumn 2027		
Page 1 of 7			

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

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

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

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

Roles and responsibilities

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

The headteacher
The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
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The attendance officer
The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers
Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes on SIMS.

School office staff
School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Recording attendance

Attendance register
We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first am session of each school day and once during the first pm session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Session Arrangements

INFANT SITE
Start of the Day

EYFS and KS1:
- School day starts at 8:45am. Arrival after this time will result in a 'Late' mark with closure of the registers at 9.20am
- Parents/carers should bring their child to the external classroom door.
- If children arrive after 9:00am, they should be taken to the front entrance to report to reception.

EYFS (part-time nursery)
- Nursery morning session times are 8.30am until 11.30am
- Afternoon session times are 12:10pm until 3.10pm
- Parents/carers should bring children and collect them from the nursery entrance.

End of the Day
- School day finishes at 3.15 pm Children are collected from their external classroom door.
- Part timers (nursery) finish at 11.30 am and 3.10 pm
- Parents/carers should collect their child via the nursery external classroom door. Any children attending SJs will be taken to an internal shared area and collected by a member of staff and escorted to SJs.
- If parents are going to be late, they are asked to contact school and collect children from reception.

JUNIOR SITE
Start of the Day

- School day starts at **8:50**am. Arrival after this time will result in a 'Late' mark with closure of the registers at 9.20am
- Parents/carers should bring children to the playground no earlier than 8:45am, when staff supervision begins.

For safeguarding reasons, we ask that parents/carers do not come into school via class entrances. If you would like to speak to a teacher or pass a message to children, please can you do so via reception at the school office. If children arrive after 9:00am, they should be taken to the front entrance to report to reception.

End of the Day
- The school day finishes at **3.20 pm**
- Children are collected from their external classroom doors, library door (Y4) or back cloakroom entrance (Y6).
- Any children attending SJs will be sent to meet on the Y3 corridor and taken by an adult to the SJs room.
- If parents are going to be late, they are asked to contact school and collect children from reception.
- Children are allowed to go home unescorted at KS2 if parents feel children are responsible enough to do so.

Unplanned absence
The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am by telephone or email. The email is office@penistonestjohns.org. If no reason for absence is received by 9.30a.m, an admin officer will phone the child's home to ascertain the reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or if a child has persistent absence (below 90%).

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

Planned absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by telephone, email or letter before the day of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

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

If there are ongoing punctuality issues and pupils are arriving late into school on a regular basis, the school will work with families to help ensure that this is prevented. If necessary, a meeting with parents will take place and support may be sought from the Education Welfare Officer or there may be a referral to Early Help.

Following up absence
Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, initially by the school office.
- If attendance remains an issue, this will be escalated to the SENCO and then the headteacher.
- Home visits will be made if there has been no communication from parent/carer after 4 consecutive days, 2 days if a child is deemed as vulnerable – CPP/CIN/SEN
- If required, a meeting with parents will take place and support may be sought from the Education Welfare Officer.
- When a child has been absent for two weeks or more, a return to school meeting will take place between parent/carer and the headteacher
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Where any child we expect to attend school stops attending, the school will endeavour to contact parents to ascertain the reason. If no response is gained, advice will be sought from the safeguarding team and a 'Missing in Education' form will be completed and referral to the police will be made if no one has seen the child.

Reporting to parents
School reports to parents on their child's attendance termly at parents evening and record annually in the written end-of-year report. If levels of attendance are identified as below 96% parents will be informed in writing each half term and support will be offered.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence
The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unavoidable absence

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.3 and 4.4 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Reducing persistent absence
Procedures for supporting families in targeting a reduction in unauthorised absence will be used if absence levels become persistent. These procedures will include; letters, closer monitoring, SENCO, Learning Mentor and EWO support meetings to discuss any support needed, advice from Education Welfare Officer of Social Services if required.

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

Although very rare, if issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Non payment of the penalty notice can be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

NB - A second Fixed Penalty Notice could lead to automatic prosecution by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice IS TAKEN IN LINE WITH BARNSLEY LA ATTENDANCE POLICY.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Strategies used to promote/reward good attendance include:
Letters, mention in sparkle and shine assembly, class rewards for attendance, praise from teacher, contact with parents if attendance improves.

Attendance monitoring

The Learning Mentor and attendance admin officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily and weekly basis and half termly and termly by the Learning Mentor and headteacher.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence is unknown, not illness or goes above 10%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

Pupil attendance data will be analysed each half term. Letters will be sent home or meetings arranged with the Learning Mentor to discuss concerns or introduce intervention strategies to improve attendance.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

School collects and stores attendance data via SIMS and is used for internal purposes to:

- Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and DfE is updated, annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Barnsley Model Attendance Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend and Covid-19 absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day