

Attendance Policy

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Statement of Intent

St James C of E Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

St James C of E Primary School, along with Surrey County Council, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve **100%** attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school immediately and give the reason for absence.

We will also support parent/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (the term after the child's 5th birthday or the summer term for Summer born children) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so, they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and amendments in 2016, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. Schools are therefore required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Education (DfE) and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parent/carers have a duty to promote full attendance at St James.

Legislation and guidance

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 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parent/carers should update the school each day the child is absent and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:45am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

At St James C of E Primary School there is a whole school approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibilities.

Mrs Murphy has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Governors

. The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Taking responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and supported to improve attendance
- Referring to relevant agencies without delay
- Safeguarding children to support their access to education
- Ensuring children receive rewards as appropriate
- Arranging calls and meetings with parent/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Liaising as necessary with the attached Inclusion Officer termly
- Determining whether there are exceptional circumstances for any leave of absence request

Headteacher, Staff and Governors:

All staff and Governors:

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- ensure that all absences are coded correctly in line with DfE guidance
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the Inclusion Officer
- work in close collaboration with the attached Inclusion Officer during their termly register analysis ensuring agreed action is carried out
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the attached Inclusion Officer

Attendance Admin staff member:

The attendance admin staff member's role is:

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- to monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level and share with Headteacher
- to share with the Headteacher any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance
- to record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register
- to ensure attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parent/carers are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call/Truancy call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parent/carers requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered in the register (see National Attendance Codes)

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- completing registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily, marking pupils present, absent or late
- following up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the Headteacher
- informing the Headteacher of concerns
- alerting to signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report them to the Headteacher

Timeline for Managing Poor Attendance

- 95-100% attendance – the class teacher will notify the school Attendance Admin Assistant of concerns, who would then contact parent/carer if appropriate.
- 90-95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parent/carers
- Where the level of absence has not improved after school intervention, and if there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the Surrey Inclusion Service. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support or Early Help, the school may make a request for support via Surrey C-Spa.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion Service when appropriate.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance and [DFE guidance](#) will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Lateness

At St James the register is taken at 8.45am and 1:10pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.15am and 1.30pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Parents and carers are asked to fill in the reason for lateness so must accompany their child into school.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parent/carers and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent/carer's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parent/carers will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Categorisation of Absence

The school will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not;
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Any student who is on roll but not present in school must be recorded.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absence

This is for students where no reason has been provided or where a reason for absence is deemed not to be valid.

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in a referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parent/carers will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parent/carers and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Issue penalty notices for unacceptable attendance
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time as a result of an **exceptional circumstance** then this must be submitted in writing, using the form attached (Appendix 1) and sent to the school office on office@stjames-veybridge.surrey.sch.uk and should, wherever possible, be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date.

The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

Family holidays

St James C of E Primary School will not authorise any holidays during term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates.

Dental and medical treatments

Unless it is an emergency, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment will be requested.

Attendance monitoring

The Headteacher, Mrs Murphy, at St James C of E Primary School monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis supported by the Attendance Admin Assistant.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent before 8:45am or as soon as is practically possible. The pupil's parent/carer is expected to contact the school each day their child is ill. If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider a referral to Surrey's Inclusion Service.

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 board.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school without an acceptable reason provided, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received by St James from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone/ text/ email.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer throughout the day and inform the Headteacher.
- If by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their concerns and the reasons for the absence. The Headteacher will endeavour to make other enquiries to ascertain that the child/ren is/are safe.
- Parent/carers will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to Surrey's Inclusion Service.
- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Inclusion Service. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is reported to parent/carers twice annually. Once at a mid-year parent/carers report, given out at Consultation meetings and on the annual end of year report.

If attendance is noted as falling, parent/carers will be informed in writing and invited to discuss strategies to improve.

Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more (which do not have to be consecutive) within a 3 month period, and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent/carer** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. **In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parent/carers had previously been warned that**

such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parent/carers' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parent/carers will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received:

- the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next (if known)
- the address of the new school (if known)
- the new home address
- the full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live (if different to current)

School staff will then confirm with the parent/carers the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. School will inform Surrey Admissions about the change of school.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also ~~need to~~ support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Resources

For further information regarding school attendance please see Surrey County Council website:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence>

Appendix 1 Application for leave of absence form

Appendix 2 Late letter (Code L)

Appendix 3 Late letter (Code U)

Appendix 4 Absence Letter

Appendix 5 School Attendance Meeting Letter

Appendix 6 Traveller Attendance letter

Appendix 7 Traveller Absence due to travelling

Appendix 8 School Referral Pathway

Appendix 1

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more will result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in the Local Authority considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
from:	to:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at...	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:
Address :	
To be completed by the Headteacher	
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:	

Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we will be requesting the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice per parent/carer per child.
Explanatory notes:		
Signed:	(Headteacher)	Date:

Appendix 2

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname» «DOB»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **8:45am** and at **1:10pm**.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 3

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname» «DOB»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates_of_lates_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total_lates_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at **8:45am** and is closed at **9:15am** for the morning session and taken again at **1:10pm** and closed at **1:30pm** for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer for further action and possible issuing of a penalty notice or prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname» «DOB»

It has come to my attention that «forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage»%. It is a statutory requirement that children must be in school and whilst on occasions there are justifiable and unavoidable reasons for the absence, I am concerned that if this level of disruption continues, it could develop into a pattern which will prove detrimental to «forename»'s progress at school.

The attendance of all pupils is screened regularly and should your child's absence not improve to an acceptable level at the next register check, the Inclusion Service will be advised.

Please do not hesitate to contact me using the email address office@stjames-veybridge.surrey.sch.uk if you feel I can be of any assistance to you regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 5

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname» «DOB»

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed «total_authorized_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am now inviting you to attend a meeting to discuss this further. The time and date have been set for «date and time ».

It is important that you to attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by: «**insert attendees** »

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 6

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname» «DOB»

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «forename» has been absent from school. This academic year, «forename» has missed «total_authorized_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage_attendance»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer if «forename»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about «forename»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 7

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Traveller Absence «forename» «surname»

Thank you for contacting me to say that «forename» will be absent from school from ?? **Date** as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «forename»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «forename» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer «forename» to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take «forename»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 8

Expectations of School prior to Referral to Inclusion Service

Expectations of School prior to Referral to Inclusion Service

