



## **St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School**

### **Attendance Policy 2022**

Approved by Resources Committee January 2022

For review January 2025

Updated in line with most recent DFE School attendance guidance -August 2020

Updated to reflect changes to school day September 2022

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## **Section 1:**

### **Rationale / Statement of Intent:**

1.1 Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum. High levels of attendance at school significantly impact upon academic and developmental outcomes.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

1.2 The government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:

promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;  
ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,  
act early to address patterns of absence.

- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

(DFE School attendance Guidance August 2020)

### **1.3 Legal requirements**

The legal powers and duties that govern school attendance apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents and this policy is drawn up with reference to the latest DFE guidance (August 2020) which summarises them.

These requirements are contained in:

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

## **Section 2: Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality**

2.1 The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents detail on whole school attendance and their child's attendance record at least annually
- Report to you on your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance privately and publically, for individuals and groups as appropriate
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Communicate directly with parents/carers when a child's attendance is below, or close to being below 90%
- Hold meetings with parents/carers to work together to raise attendance levels for children

### **2.2 Roles and Responsibilities:**

Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team:

- Direct the school's work to maintain good attendance and improve it
- Ensure the Attendance Policy is understood by staff and applied correctly
- Ensure attendance is correctly recorded and analysed
- Ensure that any attendance concerns are identified at an early stage and support offered to parents/carers in the first instance to address any difficulties
- Work alongside the Attendance Officer to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and support is put in place for families promptly

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately and promptly
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the headteacher or deputy headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality

Responsibilities of Children:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents/carers will:

- Inform the school of the reason for absence on the first day of absence
- Discuss with the headteacher any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments and provide evidence of the appointment with a specialist etc if time must be taken out of school for a medical or dental appointment

- Keep their contact details up to date
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

## Section 3: Attendance and absence procedures

### 3.1. Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.50am, and then after lunch break at 1.00pm.

### 3.2. Lateness / Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss learning, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others and it can feel embarrassing, leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.50am. All **pupils are expected to be in school at the time.**
- The register closes at 9.00am.
- Children who arrive after 8.50am but before 9.00am are registered as late (code 'L'). All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9.00am will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, and the school has been informed in advance, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is ineffective, not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school or the Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

### 3.3 Absences

#### 3.31 First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible and before 9.05am on the first and subsequent days of absence

Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by:

- phone 01329833141
- email [office@stjohnthebaptistprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@stjohnthebaptistprimary.co.uk)
- using the Arbor app to communicate the absence with the school
- visiting the office in person at the start of the school day

Please be advised that where possible doctor and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. We would not expect medical appointments to necessitate more than a half-day absence in most cases. The school will ask to see evidence of medical appointments e.g. hospital letter. Please submit a copy of the letter to the school office in advance of the appointment. If no such paperwork is received, the absence may not be authorised.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; *this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Record the absence and ensure that a written explanation is provided by the parents/carers
- Monitor attendance and contact parents/carers if we become concerned about a child's attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or another member of the leadership team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

### 3.32 Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a Child Missing in Education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/carers and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family, calling in person at the address we have on record. This may include visiting the known home address to try to ascertain that the child is safe. If contact is unsuccessful the school will follow Hampshire County Council Guidance.

### 3.33 Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure the school have their up to date contact details.

### 3.34 Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (equivalent to 3 weeks/15 sessions or more schooling across the school year) for whatever reason they are defined as a **persistent absentee**. Where this absence is authorised the school will contact parents/carers to arrange a meeting to discuss reasons for persistent absence and ways in which we may support you in improving your child's attendance.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you to see how we can work with you to so this can be improved.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

### 3.35 Collection at the end of the school day

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/ or significantly late (after 3.15pm) the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupils to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. The school will place a child in after school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill for childcare.



## Section 4: Request for Leave of Absence:

Children have 13 weeks annual holiday from school and [school holiday dates are published well in advance online](#). As such, all parents/carers are expected wherever possible to plan and take their family holidays at this time so as not to disrupt their children's education. Education law states that parents **do not** have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the noticeboard in the school foyer, reception or the school website) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

For National Guidance refer to:

- School Attendance 2015 located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>
- For County advice and guidance refer to: Hampshire County Council Guidance for schools and other education providers – promoting pupil attendance and recording absence.
- Guidance on approval of Extended leave of absence  
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/iba-resources-forschools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

## Section 5: Authorised & Unauthorised Absences:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent/carer's request. This includes:
  - sickness of a parent, or other family member
  - inadequate clothing for school
  - child being used as a carer
  - problems with transport
  - non-urgent medical treatment
  - school refusal or truancy
  - days off for birthdays, shopping trips, visiting relatives
  - other family events or celebrations
  - family holiday
  - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

## Section 6: Legal Measures

For national guidance refer to: **‘Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance’** which covers legal measures for non-attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

### 6.1 Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### 6.2 Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire’s Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. **The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
2. **The child has ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child’s absence.**

Once you have registered your child at a school it is your responsibility to make sure that she/he attends regularly and punctually. If you fail to do so the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance.

There are a number of legal measures that the Local Authority can pursue, these include:

- being issued a voluntary parenting contract
- being included in the fast track system which means you will be given 12 weeks to improve your child's attendance
- receiving a penalty notice. This is a fine of £60 per parent/carer for periods of unauthorised absence such as truancy, holidays in term time, lateness, unauthorised absence during formal exams, schools assessment or testing or poor patterns of attendance/punctuality
- being prosecuted in the Magistrates’ Court. This means you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence  
your child being issued with an education supervision order. This is an order where the child attends court and certain measures are put in place regarding attendance at school

### 6.3 Legal Measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from [Hants.gov.uk](https://www.hants.gov.uk)  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes G U O on register)
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

**If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:**

- 1. Ten sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
- 2. One or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents/carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent/carer.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Please note:** If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

## Section 7: Other information

### 7.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

### 7.2 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Good school attendance habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents/carers set the standards and expectations for your child. Showing your child the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but helps them to keep and maintain friendships and enjoy the school environment.

Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child.

You should:

- create good routines for mornings at home so that your child can arrive punctually and they are properly equipped; this will also mean your mornings can start calmly too
- make time to encourage and show interest. Chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch! Remember children can be tired when coming out of school, so a short chat over a snack or later that evening may produce a better result than a long list of questions
- read all school communications. A home/school diary can help with communication only when all parties use it as intended
- attend school open evenings and functions
- check your child understands the homework and that it has been completed. Support them in completing homework by creating a calm space for them to work in and set specific times during the week when homework should be done
- share any education concerns your child or you may have with the appropriate member of school staff
- set realistic boundaries and sanctions (do not impose boundaries that neither your child nor you will be able to keep, eg grounding a child for a month will not work, short periods will have much more effect)
- avoid absence from school wherever possible – try to make doctors and dental appointments out of school hours. Absence means your child will miss out on the academic studies and will also learn that education is not the main priority within the family. This can have a lifelong effect

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

### 7.3 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents/carers are asked to:

Give the office team comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

#### 7.4 Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling

***The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers can authorise this absence.***

***For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Hantsweb at***

***<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-employment.htm>***

***National Advice - <https://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>***

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. Head teachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education

#### 7.5. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport

Parents/carers may seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international sporting event / competition. It is however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

#### 7.6 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

***For further advice and guidance on Attendance & GRT and Showman see***

***County Guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>***

***Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12month period to be able to request leave for work purposes***

***Further support & Guidance is available from Hampshire's EMTAS Service***

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the



absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

**Please see appendix A (section 6) for more information**

## **Section 8: Additional information**

### **8.1 Record preservation**

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years on our management information system, Arbor.

### **8.2 The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

### **8.3 Register and Admission Roll keeping**

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

### **8.4 Guidance documents on attendance**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/attendance-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>

## 8.5 Codes for registration certificates

Codes	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
-	All should attend/no mark recorded

## Appendix 1. Attendance and admissions for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

Section 6 see separate Hampshire document