



**St Joan of Arc School**  
Growing together

**Policy**

# **Attendance and Punctuality**

**2024-25**

# Mission Statement

The Members of the Community of St Joan of Arc School, by respecting each other, learn and grow in the love of Christ.

**School Attendance Lead:** Mr Anthony Vallejo

**Attendance Officer:** Kate Cattermole

**Safeguarding Governor (responsible for attendance):** Lindsay Christie

## The Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at the school.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for all people involved in maintaining pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To implement a system of sanctions and rewards.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and responding to attendance data.
- To work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

## INTRODUCTION

St Joan of Arc School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full education, which maximises their opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school so that each pupil is able to realise his/her full potential.

Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and

for this reason, the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to and

that all children are given the opportunity to attend school every day on time.

Children are entitled to and must receive a primary school education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the academic year they turn 11 years old.

Pupils, parents and carers, teachers, support staff and governors all have a role in maintaining a high standard of attendance and punctuality. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy meets the requirements of the '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)' guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), August 2024, and refers to the 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

## Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following terms are defined as follows:

- **Persistent Absenteeism:** A pupil who has an attendance rate of less than 90% over a specified period.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence that has not been approved by the school, including holidays taken during term time without prior consent.
- **Authorised Absence:** An absence that is approved by the school, typically for reasons such as illness or medical appointments.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** Situations that significantly impact a child's ability to attend school, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## EVERY LESSON COUNTS! EVEN CASUAL ABSENCE CAN AFFECT YOUR CHILD'S ATTAINMENT.

### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

**The Education Act 1996 states that: 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 educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

**A person ceases to be of compulsory school age** at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

### RECORDING ATTENDANCE DATA

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 session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30 a.m. and will be kept open until 8.40 a.m. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.40/1.20 p.m. and will be kept open until 12.50/1.30 p.m.

A mark / (a.m.) and \ (p.m.) is used to indicate present and the letter N is used to indicate absence. We will also record for pupils of compulsory school age (A child reaches compulsory school age the term after their fifth birthday)

Whether the absence is authorised or not:

- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30 a.m. on each school day.

All authorised absences will have the correct code entered with an explanation of the absence in the notes section, entered by office staff.

All lateness will be marked with an L and the time. If a pupil arrives after the register closes without an acceptable explanation, it is marked with a U-UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE and is considered as an unauthorised absence. If mistakes are made, the office should be notified immediately. If a staff member or the class teacher receives information about attendance or lateness, they are to inform the office staff.

## **ARBOR**

All information with regards to attendance is held on ARBOR Class registers are electronic, and are viewed by the Attendance officer at the end of the registration period.

## **CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ANDSENCES**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office

### **Authorised Unplanned Absence**

- An authorised Unplanned Absence is when a pupil is away for a reason acceptable to the school. The school (not the parent) determines whether an absence is authorised after receipt of a verbal or written explanation from the parent/carer. Explanations from pupils or siblings are not sufficient.
- 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 Authorised 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.
- 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 school will no longer authorise any term-time holidays for leisure or recreation. Exceptional circumstances must directly affect the child, not the parent/carer**
- If a parent/carer feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child out of school for leave of absence, they must complete a Term Time Absence Request Form, in advance, for consideration by the headteacher.
- Each case will be considered individually based on the nature of the event, history of term time absences, the pupil's current attendance, age, achievement, and the time of year with respect to the curriculum. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision.

**Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children away during term time.**

## Unauthorised Absence

- Parents/carers are expected to make sure their child attends every day on time. Any time taken without the school's authorisation, or any additional time taken over and above the amount authorised will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- If a pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
  - Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If no contact is made, or if the absence has been extended for anything other than unavoidable circumstances, the school will refer the family to Access and Engagement Services (AES) if they do not return within 10 school days.
  - 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
  - Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer
- **A penalty notice will be issued if a student accrues 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) within any 10-week rolling period. Fines start at £80, increasing to £160 if not paid within 21 days**

**Repeat offences within 3 years will result in fines starting at £160 with no option for lower payment. Further enforcement options, including prosecution or court action, may apply for continued unauthorised absences..**

## **Regular Attendance Reviews**

The school will conduct ½ termly attendance reviews to assess overall patterns and identify students who may need additional support or intervention. This proactive approach ensures that attendance issues are identified early, allowing for timely action to improve student attendance.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

St Joan of Arc recognises that there are times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall within term time, and will allow one day absence authorised for these times.

Parents/ carers will be aware that written notification should be requested in advance.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is treated as an authorised absence. The school will arrange for work to be sent home.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

School gates open at 8:15 a.m. for a soft start and school officially starts at 8.30 a.m. and it is expected that all pupils arrive in good time.

If pupils arrive after 8.30 a.m. They are to come through the main entrance at Northolme Road. Pupils will need to sign in via the screen at the school office. The attendance officer will send the parent/s a letter if there is regular lateness. All unauthorised lates (those after the register closes) are treated as absences.

## **MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND RESPONDING TO PATTERNS OF ABSENCE**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. The Attendance Lead and Officer will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified and addressed, the school's attendance lead and officer will meet each half term to discuss and agree a course of action for all pupils with attendance under 90%. The agreed action may include:

- Attendance officer will continue to closely monitoring the situation
- Text reminders to parents when child's attendance starts to drop below 95%
- Attendance lead will send an initial warning letter communicating the school's concerns
- Attendance lead will make initial contact with a parent to inform them of Early Help Services
- School will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- If no improvement after suitable interventions by the school, the EAS may become involved
- Attendance lead will complete a formal referral to EAS (which can include home visits, referrals to outside agencies and statutory action)
- **Special attention will be given to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and those with Special**

Educational Needs (SEN), as these groups have been identified as at higher risk of persistent absenteeism.

Although all cases are considered individually, the attendance lead will generally become involved when a pupil's attendance falls below 90% in one term. If the issues persist, the school will take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners

### **SUPPORTING THE REINTEGRATION OF PUPILS AFTER EXTENDED ABSENCES**

All pupils who return to school after an extended period of absence need to be supported. Each case will be considered individually and a plan will be drawn up to best support the pupil's academic and social reintegration into the school.

### **Collaboration with External Agencies**

The school is committed to working with local authorities, social services, and educational welfare officers to provide comprehensive support for families and students facing barriers to attendance. This collaboration will ensure that students receive the necessary interventions to improve their attendance and educational outcomes.

### **TAKING PUPILS OFF ROLL**

All pupils who leave St Joan of Arc School to attend another school (except for secondary school transfers) will remain on roll until their admission elsewhere is confirmed.

In the case of pupils who disappear (i.e. leave with no indication of where they are going or whether they will return), the school will make every effort to contact the family on the telephone and in writing. If contact cannot be established, the school will make a formal referral to EWS.

### **ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

- Termly monitoring whole school attendance
- Termly meeting with families persistently struggling with attendance
- Whole school activities focusing on raise the profile of attendance and punctuality through.
  - Displays around the school and Website
  - Weekly certificates for best class attendance
  - Newsletters and text reminders of the importance of good attendance

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

- It is essential the parents/carers of all pupils understand the school's attendance policy and their role in ensuring their child has good attendance.
- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school on time each day.
- Parents/carers must contact the school in person or on the telephone to provide an explanation on the first day their child is absent.
- Parents need to do everything they can to promote the value of good education for their children, and to prevent any unnecessary school absences, such as making medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

**This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body or earlier if necessary, in response to changes in legislation or school needs:**

## **The Governing Body**

**It was last reviewed in**

**September 2024**

**It will next be reviewed in**

**September 2025**

