

St James CE Primary Academy



Together through faith we will aspire to grow in our understanding of ourselves, in our abilities and in our knowledge of God's wonderful diverse world.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review Date: September 2026

Values

St James CE Primary Academy believes that good attendance and punctuality are extremely important if children are to thrive in school. As a Church of England academy we have a strong commitment to providing a nurturing environment, supporting families through our Christian ethos and expecting the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils.

At St James we consider that it is not only important for pupils to have consistently high attendance but also to arrive in school promptly for the start of the school day, this allows the teacher to begin with all of their class on time. Having a good routine and being punctual helps children understand the significance of being organised and arriving promptly every day as they grow up and are ready for a life beyond school.

Aims

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all stakeholders, pupils, parents, LAC members (governors) and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to- date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.

- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities.

As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local

Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 2025 school attendance guidance, from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

The Head of School and Executive Principal will:

- Be responsible for overall attendance and punctuality and monitor accordingly

- Ensure that stakeholders are aware of their role in ensuring good attendance
- Present information to the LAC members (governors) as and when required
- Monitor Persistent Absence (PA) data
- To liaise with external agencies where necessary.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Staffordshire County Council policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Staffordshire County Council policies and procedures.
- To meet with the school office manager to monitor data and respond to findings.
- Be available to support, guide and advise staff in relation to attendance matters
- To work with teachers to plan for the re-integration of pupils after long term absence.
- Revise and update the school policy for attendance, as required

All teaching staff will:

- Complete the formal register of attendance twice daily at 9.05 am and 1.00 pm (reception, year 1 and 2) or 1:30 pm, (year 3, 4, 5 and 6).
- Regularly remind children and parents/carers about the importance of good attendance.
- Follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.

- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- Promptly inform the Head of School of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- Feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Procedure for reporting absence

We do understand that there may be times, when a child is ill and the best place to be is at home with an adult. A sick child may be unhappy at school and unable to cope with schoolwork. If a child has a minor illness, (e.g. mild headache, stomach ache, cold), parents should inform the school and bring them in. If a child continues to feel unwell or the condition worsens, school will contact the parents immediately so that the child can be collected.

If a child is absent from school, for whatever reason, it is the responsibility of the parent /carer to notify the school by 8:30 am or as soon as is practically possible by telephoning 01543 490378 or emailing the school office office@st-james.staff.sch.uk. There is an answering machine in the main office so a message can be left at any time.

Parents must also notify the school by telephone or email if a child is going to be late.

We ask families for their support in the following:

- Ensuring their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promoting a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Telephoning/Emailing school to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child and each day after that.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents' evenings and other school events, where possible.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

- Not arranging medical, dental or optician appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Working in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Medical or Dental Appointments

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary; an appointment at the start or end of the day would help minimise the amount of time out of class.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence if this has been agreed and evidence of the appointment has been provided; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

Promoting/Rewarding Excellent Attendance

At St James CE Primary Academy, we use a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

- Celebration Assemblies
- Weekly newsletter
- Breakfast and After School Club
- Parent/teacher consultations
- PSHE

Monitoring and Recording Attendance and Punctuality

Morning Register

Class registers are recorded via our SIMS system. At 9.05am registers are completed and submitted to the school office. Registration is open until 9.05am.

From 9.05am the school gates and entrances are closed.

Children who are late must report to the school office and the registers are updated.

Pupils arriving at school after 9.05am will be marked as 'late.'

Afternoon Register

Registers are submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch and before afternoon lessons begin.

Punctuality Records

The Executive Principal and Head of School regularly monitor punctuality. The Head of School will speak to parents who are repeatedly late and offer support. If lateness does not improve then the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service.

Managing Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not been notified, a first day absence call will be made. The Office Manager follows these procedures:

- Phone parent/carers' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and up-date the school system accordingly.
- Executive Principal/Head of School to speak to parent/carer at home time, if they are at school to collect other children.
- Speak to parents/carers face- to- face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- If no contact can be made the school would contact the Education Welfare Service or the Safeguarding Team.

Extended Holidays

Leave of absence for pupils during term time is not authorised. St James CE Primary Academy recognises that taking children out of school is detrimental to their education and may constitute a safeguarding risk. The school will make necessary enquiries in order to be satisfied that a pupil is not at risk.

School leaders may now only grant leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, for example but not limited to:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil.
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil.
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery.

Penalty Notices

Parents and children will be supported by the school, the Local Support Team and Education Welfare Services to overcome barriers to regular attendance. Therefore Penalty Notices will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem.

The Education Act (1996) empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Principals, (as well as Deputy and Assistant Principals authorised by them), and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 states:

If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.

(Please refer to Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices.)

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis

The next review will be due September 2026