



Attendance policy

Independent school standards and statutory guidance	Paragraphs 7, 15 and 34. <u>DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance'</u> (August 2024)
Last updated by senior leaders	September 2024
Last reviewed by advisory board	September 2024
Next review due	September 2025

Introduction

- At St. John's Prep. and Senior School, we expect all pupils to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards education. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We reward those pupils whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, at St. John's we place great emphasis on this in our communication with parents. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.
- Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.
- At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.
- Pupils are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Principal or Headteacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.
- We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children, which means they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.
- **Parents are reminded that they must arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted.**

Attendance registers and codes

- We ensure an attendance register is kept that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. At both Schools, attendance is recorded daily using our online system and checked for accuracy weekly and for persistent absences, half termly.

- We pay regard to the Department for Education's latest statutory attendance guidance, [*Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(August 2024\)*](#), including use of the required attendance codes, which have been updated from August 2024.

Leave during term time

- St John's does not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any request must be made directly to the Principal or relevant Headteacher.

Common types of absence

- **Illness** (I code): In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carers informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parent/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- **Medical/Dental Appointments** (M code): Parent/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to school.
- **Other Authorised Circumstances** (C code): This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example a family bereavement.

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised; parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or for a day trip on their birthday, this will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedure if a pupil is unexpectedly absent (same-day calling and follow-up)

1. When a pupil is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and check with the school office, to see if any telephone messages have been received. If no message has been received, the class / form teacher (or a secretary) will contact the parents to ascertain why the pupil is not in school.
 2. If it is not possible to contact the parent or carer a second attempt will be made.
 3. If there is still no answer, a call will be made to one of the people on the pupil's emergency contact list.
 4. A home visit is a last resort and will be undertaken if no contact can be made.
 5. If necessary, contact will be made with social care services and/or the police.
- When the pupil returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence. If the absence lasts longer than 3 days, then a Doctor's Certificate may be requested.
 - A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example, if a pupil has a medical appointment.

Long-term absence

- When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school, the school will do all it can to send material home, or provide remote / recorded access to lessons, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Repeated absences and poor punctuality

- If a pupil is regularly late for school or has attendance falling below 95%, then the class / form teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. The teacher registers their concern on our online system. If the problem persists and/or there is an urgent concern then the class teacher talks to the Principal or Headteacher immediately who will follow up the matter with the pupil and their parents, and in extreme cases, the Education Welfare Service.

Truancy

- Although it is a very rare occurrence for a pupil to truant, as only a few senior pupils come to school by public transport, if there should ever be a concern that a pupil might be truanting then action would be taken straight away by the senior school Headteacher who would contact the parents and, if necessary, the Educational Welfare Service.
- Incidents of internal truancy will be dealt with by the relevant senior leader under the school's behaviour policy.

Resolving attendance concerns

- Class / form teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately.
- If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular pupil, this will be reported to the Principal, relevant Headteacher and or Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate, who will speak with the pupil and contact the parent. If there are any worries or problems in school that might make the pupil not want to attend, these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

Uncollected pupil procedure for pupils who do not travel independently to and from school (for early years children please see separate early years policy)

In the event of a pupil not being collected at the end of the school day, the following steps are taken:

1. The responsible teacher / head of year will check if a message has been received by the office and if not, will telephone the pupil's parents or the pupil's emergency contacts, as necessary.
2. In the unlikely event of no contact being made with the pupil's parents or emergency contacts, the member of staff will defer to a senior leader on site, who will assume responsibility for the pupil's care if they continue not to be collected.
3. If the pupil's parents or emergency contacts have not been contacted by the evening, the senior leader will inform the DSL, Principal, and finally, as a last resort, social care services / the police, to agree a plan. The pupil will be cared for by a senior leader until a suitable plan is enacted, such as being escorted home or collected by an emergency contact, social care worker or the police.

Monitoring and reviewing attendance and absence

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to monitor overall attendance.
- The attendance registers and any patterns of absence are regularly reviewed by the Principal, senior leaders and advisory board.