

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

St John's School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good progress and high attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents / carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it via the school website.

2. Aims & Objectives

2.1 This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

2.2 Throughout this policy School Name aims to:

To improve pupils' achievement by promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Achieve 100% for all pupils, apart from those with acute or chronic health issues.

Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence. (if applicable)

Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

To make explicit St John's CEVA Primary School's registration procedures.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

All teaching and support staff at St John's School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.1 Governors

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first whole governing body meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. Governors will receive regular attendance reports. Governors will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.2 Senior Leadership Team

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that this policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents / carers (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance).

2.3 Parents / Carers

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents / carers are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our home-school agreement, parents / carers agree to ensure their child has regular and punctual attendance. We share the children's attendance records with parents / carers as part of our annual written reports. The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

Appendix 1 of this policy is An Attendance Guide for parents / carers.

Parents / carers are expected to:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- understand that the school will not automatically agree any requests for absence, and the school will not condone unjustified absence.
- notify St John's School on the first day of absence preferably before 8.30am
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents / carers meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. St John's School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

2.4 Pupils

All pupils are aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils are required to attend all their lessons on time and be ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents / carers to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

3 Procedures

3.1 Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes below:

Register Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

The register will be called promptly at 8.55am and 1.00 pm by each teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at 9.10 am and 1.15 pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

3.2 Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher

St John's School recognises the clear links between attendance and progress / attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents / carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at St John's School will therefore challenge parents / carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.

Absence for medical appointments should be arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the headteacher.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the

particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,

- in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents/carers have sought permission in advance.
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong;
- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parents/carers is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parents/carers;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parents/carers is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

3.3 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

3.4 Staff training

All staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4 Collection and analysis of data

Attendance data is held electronically on a separate SIMS Management Information System and the attendance of pupils is monitored weekly. Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

5 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

5.1 First-day calling

St John's School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents / carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents / carers' knowledge.

5.2 Meetings with parents / carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents / carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans will be put in place with the parents / carers and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents / carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

5.3 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a

legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Fixed Penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after the times of 9.10 am and 1.10 pm.

Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes are entered into the late book held in the office. This is regularly monitored for patterns. Where a pattern emerges the parents / carers are asked to attend a meeting at the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day have reported to the school office on departure and arrival. No pupil will leave the school during the school day unaccompanied.

6 Term-time Holidays

The Government has issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period

- Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.
- Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents/carers are unable to take holiday at any other time.

St John's School will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents / carers who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

St John's School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing. St John's School will NOT authorise a holiday during any period of national testing, i.e. SATs.

7 . Fixed Penalty Fines & Court

7.1 A fixed penalty notice fine will be issued when 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (5 whole days in total). School will give a reminder/warning about attendance when 5 unauthorised sessions have been recorded (2.5 days in total) and then expect to see no further unauthorised absences.

7.2 If parents/carers choose to take their child(ren) on a term-time holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child(ren)'s absences will be marked as unauthorised.

7.3 The penalty notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

Second and subsequent unauthorised term-time holidays may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

8. Absence for Other Reasons

8.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.

To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

8.2 When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

8.3 Regular monitoring of all pupil's attendance is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

9. Role of the Education Welfare Officer

9.1 To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.

9.2 To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

9.3 To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.

10. Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas, St John's School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents/carers may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents/carers could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;

- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

11 Review and monitoring

This policy is monitored by the governing body and reviewed every two years.

Signed:

		Date
Version	1.6	
Drafted by	R Loggie	11/05/17
Reviewed by	J Betts	30.09.19
Approved by	WGB	
Ratified by	Governing Body	02.10.19
Review period	2 years	
Set by	Governing Body	
Date of Review		Oct 2021

Appendix 1 AN ATTENDANCE GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS AT ST JOHN'S CEVAP SCHOOL

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The children should be lined up on the playground at the sound of the whistle at 8.50am. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.55am and the afternoon register at 1.00pm. Children should NOT arrive before 8.40am as they cannot be supervised.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 9.10 am in the morning and 1.10 pm in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between 9.00 am and 9.10am he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives after 9.10 am he/she will be marked absent.

If your child arrives between 1.00pm and 1.15pm he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives after 1.15 pm he/she will be marked absent.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign the Late Book. Pupils should also advise office staff of their lunch requirements. Late arrivals are monitored by the teachers and the office staff. If a pupil is regularly late then we will contact parents / carers to arrange a meeting to discuss and resolve the situation

3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

Parents / carers must notify School on the first day of absence- in person or by telephone by 8.30am –with the reason for the absence and a likely date of return. If we do not hear from you we will phone you or your registered other contact numbers. (see 6) Parents / carers must notify the school on all subsequent days if the expected date of return is not met. (See Appendix 2 – A parent's guide to managing sickness absence from school) Parents / carers must notify the school in writing in advance of any known future absences e.g. medical appointments, exams etc. Verbal messages via siblings are not acceptable. On return to school parents / carers should confirm in writing the reason for absence and give this to the class teacher. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness (see Appendix 2 – A parent's guide to managing sickness absence from school)

- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Attending an interview for a school, or attending an external examination e.g. music, ballet etc.
- Family holiday-only when prior approval has been given by the headteacher (see 7)
- Extended family visits abroad -only when prior approval has been given (see 8)
- Part-time attendance at educational unit e.g. Pupil Referral Unit, Hearing Impaired Unit etc.
- Participation in an approved public performance

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance by completing an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form, giving full details in writing. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence:

- If no explanation is received from parents / carers
- For looking after siblings, shopping trips, unexpected special occasions e.g. birthdays
- For family holidays longer than the duration originally authorised by the headteacher (see7)
- For family holidays where prior permission was not sought or was refused. (see 7)
- For family holidays during the first week of the new academic year
- The headteacher will not approve your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with the weeks of SATs and internal testing.

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you by 9.30am. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. Can we take family holidays during term time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If in exceptional circumstances you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an

'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form at least 3 weeks in advance. Permission for an absence exceeding two weeks in any one year, will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

The headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to your child's age, time of year and the overall attendance pattern of your child. The decision of the headteacher is final. There is no right of appeal against this decision.

8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs or in the first week of the new academic year. You would need to complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' application form for extended leave of absence and if the headteacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and is properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Ensure that your child completes and returns his / her homework by the set deadlines to prevent last minute anxieties. Ensure that your child arrives in time to line up on the playground with his / her class when the whistle blows and after waving to your children please leave the premises promptly via the playground gate.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

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, 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 an Education Welfare Officer at the Local Authority. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

St John's CEVAP School



Appendix 2 A parent's guide to managing sickness absence from school

