St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation | For the good of all through curiosity, creativity and love

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At St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation, our vision is 'For the good of all – through curiosity, creativity and love.' This vision inspires everything that the federation does. It applies equally to all the federation's policies with the intention that our policies impact as fairly and positively as possible to meet the needs of all members of our schools' community.

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Further sources of information:

Relevant legislation

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
The Education Act 1996 and 2002
The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Other DfE guidance

Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Keeping children safe in education
Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation
Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. Promoting good school attendance, good punctuality and reducing absence is central to ensure:

- every pupil's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding
- every pupil has access to full-time education
- that pupils make good progress academically and personally
- that pupils leave with the best possible opportunities for their future

This policy outlines the responsibilities for the school and parents in ensuring that pupils' attendance at St John and St Nicolas Schools is the best it can be. It also outlines the strategies used by the school, alongside West Berkshire Council, to support and improve attendance.
The policy aims for all pupils to attend school regularly so they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Within this document 'parent' is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Pupils (when developmentally ready to take some responsible) are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day and ready to learn.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might affect their school attendance.

2.2 Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.15am with an explanation given.
- Providing full contact details, and emergency contact details; and update the school if any changes to these occur.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Not booking holidays during term-time.
- Treating staff with respect.
- Actively supporting the work of the school.
- Calling on staff for help when they need it.
- Communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.
- Proactively engage with support offered.

2.3 All school staff are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Providing a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- An awareness that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expecting regular attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community.

2.4 Head Teacher and Senior Leadership are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognising attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Having a Senior Attendance Champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan. In our school this is Heather Whiting at St John's and Louise Allen at St Nic's.
- Analysing attendance data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- Making sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- Consulting with the Local Authority Education Attendance Service where there are concerns around pupil's attendance or if there is a child missing from education.
- Governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

3. Recognising and rewarding good attendance

Regularly discuss and celebrate good attendance to help pupils and parents to understand the importance. This can be done through publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body. The school may offer incentives for good or improving attendance, such as prize draws and stationery gifts; and recognition such as certificates and postcards home. The school will remain mindful that some children, due to long term medical conditions, may never be able to achieve a high rate of attendance. This is taken into account when considering rewards for attendance and will include improved attendance so that individuals are not disadvantaged in these circumstances.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance registers

Accurate and timely registers enable the school to safeguard children as well as to recognise and act upon any concerning attendance patterns. Registers are taken at the start of every morning and afternoon session.

4.2 Lateness

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at school on time.

- Pupils are expected to be on site by 8.50am at St John's and 9am at St Nic's.
- Pupils who arrive between 8.45 and 9.15am at St John's and 9am and 9.30am at St Nic's will be marked as late, but counted as present for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed (after 9.15am at St John's or after 9.30am at St Nic's) will be marked as absent for that session. If the parent provides a satisfactory explanation this will be marked as an 'authorised absence'; if the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation this will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence' for that session.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.05pm.
- A normal school day ends at 3.15pm at St John's and 3.30pm at St Nic's.

4.3 Responding to absence

Parents are responsible for contacting the school when their child is absent to explain the reason. Parents should phone or email the school office.

- If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to parents in the first instance (or by text, email or letter if unable to make contact)
    - To ensure safeguarding, if absence continues without explanation, or if further information is needed, a home visit may be carried out.
    - Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, as required, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry identification and will expect to see the child in question, if only briefly, to ascertain how they are.
- Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member if staff in line with DfE guidance in Working Together to improve school attendance (2022). This decision is based on the information provided by parents when the child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Leave of absence in term time

Parents must get permission from the Head Teacher in order to take their child out of school during term time. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion provided that:

- A completed application form is submitted in advance
- There are exceptional circumstances

Parents should plan holidays within the school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless absolutely unavoidable.

Parents should be aware that an unauthorised leave of absence of 10 sessions or more can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice, served per parent, per child.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. (Fines that are not paid may result in a prosecution).
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. Instead a prosecution, or other legal intervention, will be considered

5.2 When absences will be authorised

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher due to exceptional circumstances.
- The pupil is ill (and there is no reason to doubt the legitimacy of this claim).
- The parent notifies the school of a medical or dental appointment (which could not be made outside of school hours).
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Where a parent has provided no explanation or the explanation given is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

6. Monitoring and improving irregular attendance

6.1 Reducing persistent absence

We regularly monitor cases where attendance is below 95%. In cases where absences are increasing, actions are taken which aim to prevent children becoming or remaining a 'persistent absentee' (<90%).

These actions may include:

- Regular and supportive telephone contact with the parent/s
- Supportive conversations and/or regular check-ins with the pupil (where appropriate)
- Use staged letters: first letter to indicate concern for a decline in attendance; second letter with an action or target to improve attendance
- Put individual support plans in place for pupils
- Meet with pupils and parents and create a SMART plan of action & review regularly
- Share plans & meeting notes with parents
- Engage with relevant external agencies involved
- If these actions have been taken and attendance fails to improve a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Attendance Service

6.2 Attendance and safeguarding

It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires further support (this could include but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, it is recognised that some individual pupils, or pupil cohorts, may experience additional barriers to attendance. In such cases, any specific needs will be considered and, where appropriate, adaptions made.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, the local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

6.3 Formal and legal interventions

St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation and the Local Authority will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or where parents do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed.

Attendance contracts

- A formal written agreement between a parent and the school and/or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- This is a supportive tool, which aims to provide an alternative to prosecution.
- The aim is for the parent(s), pupil (if old enough), the school and Local Authority to work in partnership towards the common goal of improved attendance.

If an attendance contract is not effective at improving attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress legal interventions as a last resort:

- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Fast Track intervention
- Attendance prosecutions
- Parenting Orders

6.4 Support back into school following a period of absence

Pupils who have been excluded or have had periods of absence due to ill-health or truancy should receive appropriate support to return to school, build confidence and bridge the gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of attendance codes

Breakdown of available codes

Please refer to Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk), page 76 onwards for the full definition of codes available.

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/ \	Present at school AM / PM \	Must be in school at registration (pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration).	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. (All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes).	Attending (present)
K	Attending Education provision arranged the Local Authority (LA)	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending Work Experience	Attending work experience please see guidance for additional information	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
B	Attending any other approved	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity	Attending an approved

	Educational Activity	or work experience. *The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.*	educational activity (present)
D	Dual Registered at another school Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3	The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours.	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	This interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination	Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and should be used sparingly. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.	Authorised absence
X	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to atend school	Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 67 – 70 of Working together to improve school attendance.	Authorised Absence

C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. It must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.	Authorised absence
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised Absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised Absence
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available. *Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or*	Not a possible attendance

		above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route.	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed Relevant regulation 10(10)	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. *This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays*	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention Relevant regulation 10(14)	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention.	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in	Not a possible attendance

		itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6).	
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed Relevant regulation 10 (7) and (8)	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.	Unauthorised absence
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.	This code is not collected for statistical purposes.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance	This code is not collected for statistical purposes

Appendix 2

Annex A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register	
Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended	
1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that: (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and: (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9	8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less

	than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and: (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where: (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.