

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Our Mission

‘At SS John and Monica’s we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other’

Rationale of this Policy

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. SS John & Monica’s Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts the continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child’s ability to develop friendship groups within the school. For these reasons, the staff have created a set of procedures and practices that we hope will create an ethos whereby children want to be in school and know why non-attendance is unacceptable.

We aim to work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, governors, the Educational Welfare Service and the Local Authority to ensure that all children reach an optimal level of attendance and secure their long-term educational and life skill prospects. We take issues of non-attendance and poor punctuality very seriously and will work within the parameters of the law as provided for us by the Local Authority legal team to ensure that a child's right to an education is maintained.

School Attendance is a Safeguarding and Child Protection issue. The school will investigate all absence and will make referrals to Children's Advice Support Service (CASS) and the Missing Child Team if we have concerns about the welfare and location of any pupil at this school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead analyses patterns of behaviour and trends and takes relevant action, in line with the Attendance and Punctuality Policy, to ensure that good levels of individuals are improved or maintained.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance and punctuality are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools' commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Legal Requirements

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 apply to all maintained schools, academies, studio schools, free schools and independent schools.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:-

- Be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year (This is the same as 190 school days – morning is one session and afternoon is one session)
- Maintain attendance registers (either manual or computerised) in accordance with the relevant regulations. At SS John & Monica's, we maintain computerised registers.
- Accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness.
- Clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences according to criteria laid down by the DfE (schools should remind parents that the Headteacher decides whether or not an absence will be authorised).
- Submit termly absence returns through the School Census and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence, including details of these in the school's prospectus and annual report.
- Set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The school is committed to increasing yearly attendance and maximising opportunities for pupils to excel. As part of this commitment, we set challenging but achievable targets for children and families' school attendance.

SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School has had attendance targets of 97%

Current Legislation about Attendance

To reflect the new statutory guidance 'Working together to attend school attendance', which came into force on 19th August 2024, 'Support First' is the attendance framework, which has been developed with partners from Health, Birmingham Children's Trust, SEND services and Forward Thinking Birmingham. 'Support First' includes;

- national best practice for improving school attendance
- comprehensive guidance on addressing barriers to attendance at an early stage, including areas of concern requested by schools

- new legal procedures, including additional mandatory letters and a more formalised attendance contract

The 'Leave in Term Time (Legal) Process' has been renamed the 'Leave of Absence (Legal) Process' to reflect the language used in 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Headteachers now have more guidance on authorising absence for exceptional circumstances, and the letters have been updated.

The 'Support First' framework and the 'Leave of Absence (Legal) Process' can be found via this link: [Attendance procedures for schools | School attendance advice for schools and professionals | Birmingham City Council](#)

The updated version of 'Working together to improve school attendance' can be found here: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The Impact of Time Off and Poor Punctuality

This is our aim at SS John & Monica's is GREEN:

GREEN	97 – 100% attendance	Excellent! Fantastic attendance
YELLOW	95 – 97% attendance	Super Effort! You are trying hard to be in school
RED	Less than 95%	Danger Zone! You are missing a lot of learning time
	Less than 90%	Persistent Absence requiring formal intervention

Attendance of less than 95% (i.e. absences of 9.5 school days or more out of the 190 pupil days in the school year) is shown to compromise pupil attainment. At 90% attendance pupils miss the equivalent of almost 4 weeks education (19 school days) and only 10% of pupils who are persistently absent from school achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE.

Being late adds up to lost learning too!

If you are 5 minutes late every day, you will miss 3 school days in one year.

If you are 15 minutes late every day, you will miss 10 school days in one year.

If you are 30 minutes late every day, you will miss 19 school days in one year – the equivalent of nearly 100 hours of learning.

You need to be on time for school with all of the correct equipment to ensure you get the most from your learning opportunities at SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School.

Responsibilities of the School

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively at all levels and reasons for absences are recorded...promptly and consistently.
- Ensuring that staff know, understand and follow the set procedures about registration. The registers are legal documents and must be completed correctly.
- Maintaining an attendance board in a visible area of the school so that children and visitors can see how well they hit attendance targets.

- Promoting the need for good attendance with parents and carers so that they understand the need for consistent attendance and support their children in attending school every day.
- Raise the profile of punctuality among pupils and parents so that they understand how punctuality can affect attendance figures.
- Ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through the school prospectus, newsletters, parents' evenings or other media (parents will be reminded explicitly of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance).
- Make provision for first-day absence contact, particularly for pupils who are known to be poor attenders or who might otherwise be considered to be at risk.
- Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term time (The Head Teacher will NOT authorise any holidays taken during term time, and children who take unauthorised holidays in term time and fail to return in good time risk losing their child's school place).

School Team to Improve Attendance:

Please note that those in the attendance team will meet every week in their various capacities to monitor attendance and action on the school Attendance Policy.

- Head Teacher – Responsible for Policy/Practice, analysis of data, Reporting to Governors, Attendance Action Plan
- Office Staff – Daily attendance input on SIMS, sharing data to the Dfe, following day-to-day attendance procedures, collating weekly attendance data, sending attendance and punctuality letters, completing the Support First paperwork
- Family Support Worker – Liaises with Head Teacher and Office Staff to provide Early Help support linked to improving attendance and punctuality

Analysing Attendance Data

This is done by:

- Looking at historic and emerging patterns across the school and to develop strategies to address these
- Regular data analysis to both identify and then provide support to pupils or cohorts that need it
- Provide regular attendance reports to appropriate staff to facilitate discussions with pupils
- Conduct thorough analyses of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Monitor weekly patterns of attendance and deliver targeted support to pupils and families
- Benchmark your data against local, regional and national levels to identify areas for improvement

The Head Teacher provides termly reports on attendance for the Governing Body.

Responsibilities of Parents

In law, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered regularly, on time, and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents can do a great deal to support their children's regular and punctual attendance. Parents should:-

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Ensure that their child only misses school for unavoidable or justified reasons, such as illness or days of religious observance. These will be discussed later in this policy.

- Always notify the school as soon as possible—on the first morning—of any absence. A phone call between 8 and 10 a.m. is required to keep the registers up to date and accurate. Parents will be texted if we do not receive a message.
- To work closely with the school through the Early Help Process and its legal representatives (and agencies such as CASS, Think Family/Children’s Services, Health professionals, etc) to resolve any problems that may impede a child’s attendance
- Book non-emergency medical appointments outside school hours when possible. Most doctors, dental surgeries, and opticians have Saturday and Sunday appointments or late-night openings once a week.
- Do NOT book family holidays during term time. Only a Head Teacher can permit absence from school during the 190 days that pupils are expected to attend.
- Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the pupil nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. School and school friendships and relationships can provide pupils with stability and care during difficult times. School routine can provide a safe and familiar background to life during times of upheaval.

Implications of Unauthorised Absence

Where a Head teacher has not granted the pupil any leave and the school suspects that the parents may have taken their child on unauthorised term-time holiday, the school will immediately contact them by telephone and letter to ascertain the reason for the absence.

Parents must be advised that the pupil may lose his/her place at SS John & Monica’s School if we are unable to locate them and the statutory period of absence is reached; the family may be reported to the Child Missing in Education Team (CME), that the absence will be unauthorised (using code G) and that the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice. As part of our holistic approach to achieving excellent attendance, the school runs the ‘Support First’ Attendance programme, which is court action for pupils with 10 or more unauthorised absences over the calendar year. This process will involve legal proceedings and could result in a penalty notice being issued and possibly a criminal record.

Holidays in Term Time:

Holidays during term time are **NOT** authorised at SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School. Whilst we appreciate the advantages of travel to broaden children’s understanding of the world, we believe that with 175 days off per year, children have plenty of time to enjoy travel opportunities.

If parents insist on taking a holiday/absence during term time, it will be recorded in the registration record as **G**, the code for unauthorised absence. Parents will be asked to sign a Holiday Notification Form stating the date the child will return to school, and parents will understand that the child’s place at SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School may be lost if the contract is broken. This form does not permit the leave to occur but merely alerts the school to the pupil’s location. Parents may be liable to prosecution as part of the Spotlight Campaign and in light of guidance issued by BCC in May 2017.

We will need to see holiday confirmation documentation such as an invoice and/or flight tickets as part of the Holiday Notification process.

Support First – An Early Help Approach

When a pupil with attendance difficulties is referred to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, or Family Support Worker, they will engage in an Early Help approach and appropriate individual casework to improve the pupil's attendance.

Casework is undertaken with pupils and their parents to bring about a pupil’s return to regular attendance, taking account of individual circumstances and responding accordingly. In the worst cases, a legal route to demand a return to full attendance will be sought.

An Early Help approach will be adopted if:

- a pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- a period of entrenched non-attendance has begun
- communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response
- there is evidence of a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance
- a parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him or her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education)
- a pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area, and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume his or her education (such pupils will be treated as "children missing education")
- a pattern of persistent lateness has developed
- there are child protection concerns
- there are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education

Local Authority Policy on Prosecution

- Schools should ensure parents have access to the 'School Attendance' whole school letter to parents at least once a year (preferably in September) to alert parents to their legal responsibilities in this area and to deter parents from keeping their children at home/taking them on holiday when they should be in school. Most schools will place the letter on their website, send it via pupil post, etc.
- In the case of ongoing absence, schools are expected to try to improve a pupil's attendance via "Early Support", Birmingham's Early Help approach. This would include an Early Help offer as appropriate and ensuring that 'the voice of the child' is heard.
- Where there is an unauthorised leave in term time which reaches the threshold under the Birmingham Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, schools must use the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process' for the Local Authority to take action on their behalf.
- When a school's attempts to improve a pupil's attendance have been unsuccessful using either 'Early Support' processes, the school will refer the case to the Education Legal Intervention Team
- For the Local Authority to act, there must be a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence collected as prescribed in each process over a calendar year
- If the matter proceeds to the Magistrates Court and the parent pleads not guilty, schools must provide the relevant staff members as witnesses, having already provided ELIT with a witness statement.

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50157/education_legal_intervention_referral/690/school_attendance_advice_for_schools_and_professionals/2

Day to Day Procedures for Managing Absence and Punctuality

FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE: If it is the first day of absence and a parent or carer has explained by telephone, we will inform the teacher, record the explanation in the absence book and enter it in the register using the code which tells us why the child is away.

If we have received no information from a parent or carer, we record the absence as N. This means no reason is given and it is unauthorised. The Office will text parents whose children are not in school on the first day to ensure their children are safe and to get an explanation.

SECOND DAY OF ABSENCE: On the second day of absence, the school will still try to get in contact with parents if we have not heard from them. We are required to have an explanation for every absence. If parents do not contact us on day 2, we will text and telephone you to get a reason. Non-attendance without a cause is still recorded as **N** during this period.

THIRD DAY OF ABSENCE: On the third day of absence, if we have not received an explanation, we will send a letter home to remind parents about the need for a reason and to request that the reply slip is returned to school. Non-attendance is still recorded as **N** during this period.

Note: If by the 3rd day of absence, the parent has still not contacted school and Safe and Well Check by visiting the child's home (Two DSL's). If the child has a Social Worker attached, contact should be made with the social worker.

FOURTH DAY OF ABSENCE: In the case of ILLNESS only

The office will request evidence of illness from **ALL** pupils on the fourth day of their absence (where illness is given as the reason). Parents will be phoned and asked to provide written evidence from their doctor's surgery to prove the child has seen a doctor. This evidence must only be a copy of an appointment card stamped by the surgery reception desk or the patient slip attached to a prescription issued by a GP practice. A parent's note is **NO LONGER** enough evidence after the 3rd day of illness. Parents have the right to not provide us with any evidence; however, the school then has the right to record any suspicious absences as **N** or **O/G**. Unfortunately, some families tell the school that their child is ill to allow them to take unauthorised leave during term time.

FIFTH DAY OF ABSENCE: On the fifth day of absence, if we have not received an explanation, we will send a second and final reminder letter home warning about further action should we receive no information. This letter will come directly from the named adult responsible for attendance. It will instruct parents about the next steps that the school will take if the pupil does not return to school or if we receive no acceptable explanation. The following steps will be a home visit by a member of the senior management team and an investigation which can lead to eventual prosecution.

Medical Appointments:

Children's medical appointments should be taken in the evenings and weekends except in an emergency (e.g. hospital appointments). Medical evidence (e.g. appointment cards/hospital letters) must be produced with each planned absence. In keeping with the Equality Duty requirements, pupils with complex medical needs requiring repeated hospitalisation or appointments will be viewed differently.

Parent appointments are not an authorised reason for pupil absence, and parents are expected to make alternative arrangements to ensure that their children are in school and on time.

Religious Observance:

Children are permitted to have an authorised absence in a religious festival or observance that is a **compulsory part of their faith**. This includes one day for Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha (Islam), one day for Diwali (Sikh and Hindu), Rosh Hashanah, Passover and Shavuot (Judaism). Please bear in mind that not all religious festivals and ceremonies are compulsory, and those that the Local Authority does not regard as such will not be authorised.

A funeral is not technically a religious observance since it relates to an individual or a family rather than the entire faithful, but at SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School, we allow 1 day of authorised absence to attend the funeral of an **immediate** family member.

Cultural events are not religious observances and will be recorded as unauthorised absences if the child is off school.

Time off School

We understand that children will get sick, and we do not expect them to be in school on these occasions. We would appreciate it if parents took the time to consider which illnesses actually benefit from time off school and which are not serious enough to warrant the time off.

The school is happy to care for children who require medication. If your child needs medication, we have forms to fill out at the school office, and we will make all reasonable arrangements to support the administration of vital medications.

We would say that the following list of illnesses and ailments should be a good rule of thumb, but none of this advice overrules medical opinion.

- High Temperature – NO SCHOOL as it is usually a sign of infection.
- Infection/Contagion – NO SCHOOL as children pass the infections rapidly between each other but a visit to the doctor is required to determine the infection.
- Flu – NO SCHOOL while the child has a temperature.
- Head Lice – Attendance required once treatment has been applied (which can be overnight after discovery).
- Asthma Attack—NO SCHOOL until breathing is regulated and the child feels well. All asthmatic children should have the necessary inhalers in school.
- Broken limbs – NO SCHOOL until the permanent cast is put on and then children can attend. We will take all necessary precautions.
- Cuts and scrapes – Attendance is required, but wounds need to be clean and covered.
- Headache – Attendance is required if the child has no other symptoms.
- Migraine – Children with Migraine will be receiving treatment from their doctor so follow their advice.
- Coughs and Colds—Attendance is required unless the cough turns into a chest infection and a doctor is needed. A cold is a normal childhood illness and will not improve any quicker at home. Coughs can last for many days and vary in severity, so this is not enough reason to stay at home.
- Diarrhoea and vomiting – NO SCHOOL until 24 hours after the symptoms have stopped.
- Stomach Ache—Attendance is required depending on the cause of the ache, as long as there is no raised temperature and no other symptoms.
- Sore Throat – Attendance required.
- Earache – see a doctor. Often attendance is OK once the child is medicated.
- Conjunctivitis – Attendance required once treatment is applied
- Bruises – Attendance required.
- Rashes – see a doctor for diagnosis in case it is infectious. If it is heat rash or allergic reaction the child can still attend school with the necessary treatment. Any rash that may be contagious should be managed at home (eg Slapped Cheek).
- Sickness but no vomiting—Attendance is required, and we will monitor if you let us know that your child is feeling unwell. If there is any change in their condition, we will telephone them.
- Allergies—Attendance is required so long as we are aware of the allergy and your child has taken whatever medication deemed necessary by your doctor. Please ensure that if your child requires an EpiPen or Piriton, it is in school, on the date, and that the school has completed a red anaphylaxis card.

Attendance Initiatives

At SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School, we have introduced several initiatives to encourage children and parents to be more aware of the implications of poor attendance and punctuality. Children will participate in annual curriculum activities designed to raise their understanding of these issues.

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance informally with class teachers and through newsletters and communication from the school office.

We hold a monthly Attendance Focus Week that rewards pupils with 100% attendance and punctuality during that week. Children who maintain 100% attendance will also receive termly certificates.

Each week,, the attendance and punctuality figures for each class are analysed and displayed on the attendance board. Attendance and punctuality figures are also reported to parents in the school newsletter and in the Head Teacher’s report to Governors.

Attendance Link Governor

In September each year, the governors elect an Attendance Link Governor, who will monitor the school’s response to improving attendance.

The Head Teacher draws An attendance Action Plan each year to ensure that Attendance and Punctuality are at the forefront.

Updated: Sept 25

Reviewed: Sept 26

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

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
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> 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
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial 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

KEY

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

DfE

Appendix 2

Absence Procedures

Office Day to Day Procedures for Managing Absence and Punctuality

The official start to the school day is 8.50 am and all children should be in their classroom at this time to ensure they get a present mark in the register. Classrooms are open from 8.40 am with activities for pupils to complete.

Children who arrive after 8.50 am but before 9.15 am will be marked with an "L" in the register, and the office staff will record their names.

Children who arrive after 9.15 am will be given an unauthorised absence and marked with a "U" in the register. U means Late after the Register has closed and this is counted as an absence from school.

Children are registered again at 1.00 pm (Rec/KS1) and 1.15 pm (KS2)

The Office has an absence file which contains the names of all pupils who are absent on any given day. Once the registers close at 9.15 am the Office will follow the procedure for absence depending on how many days the pupil has been off school:

- **FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE**: If it is the first day of absence and a parent or carer has given an explanation by telephone, we will inform the teacher, record the explanation in the absence book, and enter it in the register using the code that tells us why the child is away.
- If we have received no information from a parent or carer, we record the absence as N. This means no reason is given and it is unauthorised. The Office will text parents whose children are not in school on the first day to ensure their children are safe and to get an explanation.
- **SECOND DAY OF ABSENCE**: On the second day of absence, the school will still try to contact parents if we have not heard from them. We are required to have an explanation for every absence. If parents do not contact us on day 2, we will text and telephone you to get a reason over the phone. Non-attendance without a reason is still recorded as **N** during this period.
- **THIRD DAY OF ABSENCE**: On the third day of absence, if we have not received an explanation, we will send a letter home to remind parents about the need for a reason and request that the reply slip be returned to school. Non-attendance is still recorded as **N** during this period.
- **FOURTH DAY OF ABSENCE: In the case of ILLNESS only**
The office will request evidence of illness from **ALL** pupils on the fourth day of their absence (where illness is given as the reason). Parents will be phoned and asked to provide written evidence from their doctor's surgery to prove the child has seen a doctor. This evidence must only be a copy of an appointment card stamped by the surgery reception desk or the patient

slip attached to a prescription issued by a GP practice. A parent's note is NO LONGER enough evidence after the 3rd day of illness.

- **FIFTH DAY OF ABSENCE**: On the fifth day of absence, if we have not received an explanation, we will send a second and final reminder letter home warning about further action should we receive no information. This letter will come directly from the named adult responsible for attendance. It will instruct parents about the next steps that the school will take if the pupil does not return to school or if we receive no acceptable explanation. Two members of staff may conduct a home visit to try to contact the family. If the school cannot make contact, Birmingham Children's Social Care will be contacted, and a referral will be made.

Office staff must be vigilant and record all steps as detailed above in the Office Attendance Folder (in case we need to use the folder as evidence of how we intervened to prevent the absence in legal proceedings against a parent at a later stage).

The N Code will only stay on the registers for two school weeks and will then be changed to O after the school has made all attempts to get an explanation for the absence.