



Saint Jérôme
Church of England
Bilingual School

Attendance Policy

Policy created:	September 2024
Policy reviewed and updated:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Review cycle:	At least annually, and whenever DfE or local authority guidance is updated. The previous review date of September 2025 was not met.
Linked policies:	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour for Flourishing Policy, SEND and Inclusion Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy.

Version history

Date	Version	Summary of changes
September 2024	V1	Original policy, based on the DfE's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024 edition). Named Reverend D Norris as Headteacher and Ian Fernandes as Chair of the Governing Body, both now out of date. Named Daniel Norris as the designated senior leader responsible for attendance; since he is no longer Headteacher, this role needs reassigning. Review date of September 2025 was not met.
September 2026	V2	Corrected named governance: Kate Schutte (Headteacher), Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell (Co-Chairs of Governors). Updated to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', updated 9 July 2026, replacing the August 2024 edition previously cited; the DfE describes this edition as technical clarifications, but several are genuinely new content. Added young carers as an explicitly named vulnerable cohort requiring targeted monitoring, in line with the July 2026 guidance. Softened the medical evidence provisions to reflect the guidance's reduced emphasis on requesting evidence for illness-related absence. Added a short provision on remote education as a last resort. Added a note on the new dedicated attendance and behaviour Ofsted judgement, in force from September 2026, under the updated inspection toolkit. Confirmed by the Headteacher: Kate Schutte is the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, alongside her role as Headteacher. Confirmed Kellie Reilly remains correct as Attendance Officer.

Headteacher:

Kate Schutte

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(Kate Schutte) Approved by Governors on 17th September 2026

(Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell)

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (updated 9 July 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance, updated 9 July 2026, and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority, and making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The committee responsible for attendance is the Education Committee of the Governing Body.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Officer to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

Kate Schutte, Headteacher, is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be contacted via 020 3019 6363 or office@stjeromebilingual.org.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with attendance officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Kellie Reilly and can be contacted via 020 3019 6363 or kellie.reilly@stjeromebilingual.org.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor by 9am for the morning session and 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

3.6 School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Phase Leaders / Class Teachers where appropriate, to provide more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including: all natural parents, whether married or not; all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person; and those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of absence, the reason, and when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts they may make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, by contacting the Phase Leader or Attendance Officer on 020 3019 6363 or office@stjeromebilingual.org

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every school day, on time.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto it.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, at the same time for all pupils, and once during the second session, again at the same time for all pupils. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is present, attending an approved off-site educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date it was made, and the name and position of the person who made it. See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We also record whether the absence is authorised or not for pupils of compulsory school age, the nature of the activity where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity, and the nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. We keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date it was made.

The school day starts at 8.55am and ends at 3.30pm for EYFS/KS1 and 3.40pm for KS2. Pupils can arrive in school from 8.30am but by 8.55am at the latest each school day.

The register for the first session is taken at 9am and kept open until 9.30am. Arrivals between 9am and 9.30am are recorded as late. The register for the second session is taken at 1.30pm and kept open until 2pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day, by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by emailing or calling the school office on 020 3019 6363 option 1 or office@stjeromebilingual.org.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised in the great majority of cases, without requesting evidence. We will only ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence, where the school has a genuine and specific concern about the authenticity of an illness, or where an absence is particularly lengthy; we do not ask for evidence as a matter of routine, and are mindful that requesting it unnecessarily can itself be a barrier for some families. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, having considered the individual circumstances, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance. Details of all medical appointments must be sent by email to office@stjeromebilingual.org.

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible. See section 5 for which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

- A pupil arriving before the register closes at 9.30am is marked late, using code L
- A pupil arriving after the register closes at 9.30am is marked absent, using code U
- Parents/carers are asked to sign in their child electronically via the Sign In App in the school foyer and give the reason for lateness
- The school will contact parents/carers when persistent lateness is a concern.

4.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- SMS or call the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence. If the school cannot reach any emergency contact, it may undertake a home visit before the end of the school day and inform the necessary authorities, including social services and the police, if the absence remains unexplained
- Identify whether the absence is approved and the correct attendance code to use, inputting it no later than 5 working days after the session(s) of absence
- Call the parent/carers on each day the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary; if absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice, or other legal intervention, as appropriate (see section 5.2).

4.6 Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly written reports, or sooner if there are attendance concerns.

4.7 Remote Education

Remote education is not treated as a substitute for attendance in school, and is only used as a last resort, for example where a pupil cannot attend school for a limited period due to a health need, and only where in-person alternatives are not available or appropriate. Where remote education is used, this is agreed individually with the pupil's family and reviewed regularly, with the clear aim of returning the pupil to in-person attendance as soon as possible.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations: taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad; attending an interview; a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable; or exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including its length. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unexpected, unavoidable, and outside of your control. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours, and it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks in advance, via email to office@stjeromebilingual.org. The headteacher may require evidence to support a request.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to): illness, including mental-health illness, and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3); religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong; parents travelling for occupational purposes, covering Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen, circus people, bargees and new travellers; and where the pupil is currently suspended or excluded, with no alternative provision made.

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent, which are not classified as absences, include: attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity, visit or trip; attending another school at which the pupil is also registered; attending provision arranged by the local authority; or any other unavoidable cause, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or school premises being closed.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions to tackle poor attendance. Decisions are made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher, or someone authorised by them, the local authority, or the police, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues one, it will check with the local authority first and send it a copy.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider: whether the national threshold has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks; 1 session equals half a school day); whether a penalty notice is the best available tool; whether further support, a notice to improve, or another legal intervention would be more appropriate; and whether any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion where the school has notified parents the pupil must not be present in a public place. Each liable parent can be issued a notice, usually only the parent(s) who allowed the absence.

Payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If unpaid after 28 days, the local authority decides whether to prosecute or withdraw it. A first penalty notice is £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil is £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first; where the threshold is met a third time within that period, alternative action is taken instead.

Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve, in line with the local authority's code of conduct. It will include: details of the

pupil's attendance record and offences; the benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996; details of support provided so far; opportunities for further support; a clear warning that a penalty notice may follow if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, with what sufficient improvement looks like; a timeframe of 3 to 6 weeks; and the grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of that period.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school will:

- Develop dialogue with families whose children's attendance is below the expected level
- Refer families to Early Help in accordance with local authority procedures
- Notify parents in writing where there is a specific concern
- Create an environment where everyone is responsible for attendance
- Coordinate with the SEMH Lead around pupils with specific needs
- Issue Attendance Certificates at the end of each term recognising good attendance
- Maintain an internal chart of each class's attendance week by week
- Identify and keep a record of pupils known to be young carers, and consider whether caring responsibilities are a barrier to their attendance, working with pastoral leads and, where appropriate, the local authority's young carers service.

7. Supporting Pupils Who Are Absent or Returning to School

7.1 Pupils Absent Due to Complex Barriers to Attendance

The designated senior leader for attendance will meet with any families where there is an attendance concern to fully understand the circumstances. Where necessary, additional adults will be consulted for support and guidance.

7.2 Pupils Absent Due to Mental or Physical Ill Health, SEND, or Caring Responsibilities

The designated senior leader for attendance will meet with any families where there is an attendance concern to fully understand the circumstances, including any health, SEND or young carer-related issues. Where necessary, the school SENDCO or appropriate additional adults will be consulted.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils Returning to School After a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

The designated senior leader for attendance will meet with any families where there has been a long period of absence to fully understand the circumstances, and consult additional adults where necessary, to support the pupil to attend school and be reintegrated into learning.

8. Attendance Monitoring

The school administration team monitors daily absences and reports ongoing concerns to the school attendance officer and/or designated senior leader. Analysis of trends takes place regularly throughout the school year to identify pupils falling into specific categories of attendance and liable to downward trends, using the school's MIS, including punctuality data.

8.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school monitors attendance and absence data, including punctuality, half-termly, termly and yearly, across the school and at individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information is shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

The school benchmarks its attendance data at whole-school, year group and cohort level against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and shares this with the governing body.

8.2 Analysing Attendance

The school analyses attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts needing additional support, identifies pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially patterns of persistent or severe absence, and conducts thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends, developing strategies to address them.

8.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school develops targeted actions to address patterns of absence, provides targeted support to identified pupils and families, provides regular attendance reports to class teachers and the governing body, uses data to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions, and shares information and works collaboratively with other schools, local authorities and partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

8.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school; severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more. Reducing both is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will: use attendance data to find patterns and trends; consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education; hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils considered vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, to discuss engagement, listen and understand barriers, explain the help available and the potential consequences of continued absence, and review existing actions; provide access to wider support services in conjunction with the local authority and named Attendance Officer, Heather Richardson, 020 8424 1360, heather.richardson@harrow.gov.uk, or Early Help Advisor where relevant; consider alternative support to remove barriers and re-engage pupils, sensitively considering the reasons for absence; and implement sanctions where necessary.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, and will be approved by the full governing body.

10. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Flourishing Policy
- Harrow Council's AIM (Attendance Intervention Model) policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' travelling with parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded and no alternative provision has been made
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance and normal transport is unavailable
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil cannot be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly, e.g. adverse weather
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is in police detention, remanded, or detained under sentence
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	Used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by other codes
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for a holiday not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason established, or the school isn't satisfied the reason given fits an authorised code
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil arrived late, after the register closed but before the end of session
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures known and planned in advance, including school holidays