St John Fisher RC Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



LOVE LEARN ACHIEVE

St John Fisher Mission Statement

The school, in partnership with parents, carers and with the parish of St John Fisher, offers to each one of its children a Catholic education centred on Christ, which enables them to grow in God's love, learning to be the best they can be in accordance with Christian values.

Approved by:	Mrs. K. Blom	**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2028		

Contents

1. Aims 2

2. Legislation and guidance 2

3. Roles and responsibilities 3

4. Recording attendance 6

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 9

6. Strategies for promoting attendance 11

7. Attendance monitoring 13

8. Monitoring arrangements 13

9. Links with other policies 13

Appendix 1: attendance codes 15

Appendix 2: Request for LOA form 19

Appendix 3: Attendance contract 22

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 (applies from 19 August 2024), 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 (applies from 19 August 2024) 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, 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to:

- School Census Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- Children and Young Persons Act 1933
- Equality Act 2010

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board 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
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- 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 to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- 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, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- 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

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 penalty notices.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, 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

The designated senior leader 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 leaders responsible for attendance are Janine Kenna and Claire Ellerker and can be contacted via school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk

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 Education Welfare Officers (EWO) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue penalty notices

The attendance officer can be contacted via 020 8540 2637 or admin.officer@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office immediately after registration on a daily basis by 9:10am in the morning and immediately after children return to class from lunchtime.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Inform teachers and senior leaders where needed, in order to provide them with more detailed information and support on attendance
- Organise first day calling/texts and record on registers

3.7 Parents/carers

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 they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

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 day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance officer, who can be contacted via 020 8540 2637 or admin.officer@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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
- 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 on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.
Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day (8:30am/12:30pm for Nursery)

The register for the first session will be taken by 9am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at the following times:
YrR/Yr1/Yr2 - 1pm, Yr3/4/5/6 –1.30pm and will be kept open ten minutes past that time.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling 020 8540 2637 or emailing the school admin staff school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk (see also section 7).
We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

We may request reasonable medical evidence (prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence) in cases where we need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register.

Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, schools we will take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence we will have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

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 of the appointment.
Absence for medical reasons should be made either in writing or by email (school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk) as far in advance as possible.
However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.
Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.
Requests for leave for other exceptional circumstances should be made using the request form which can either be picked up from the school office or downloaded from the website using the following link
https://www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk/parents-and-carers/attendance-and-absence/

4.4 Lateness and punctuality
A pupil who arrives late:
For Nursery children doors open at 8:30am and close at 8:40am. After that children must be brought to the school office and wait with their parent/carer to be collected by a member of staff to be escorted to the Nursery.

For Reception–Year 6 school officially begins at 8:50am (although we operate a 'rolling' start from 8:40am). Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day for registration at that time.

- **Register taken at 8:50am**
- **Registers close 9:20am**

Any child who arrives after the gates are closed at 8:50am must enter the school by the main gate entrance and report to the school office for parents to sign in. If pupils are not in class when the register is taken, they will be coded as 'L'. Any late arrivals after 9:20am will be coded as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be

on site, but this will **not count** as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.
You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

Late Collection of children after school
School ends at 3:10pm for Reception-Year 2, 3:15pm for KS2 and 3:30pm for 30hours/Afternoon Nursery children.

Please see the following information which has been taken from Merton's "LBM Children not collected from school policy."
https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-welfare-andsupport/overview

All pupils - where after school childcare provision is available – The pupil will be sent to the after school provision and admin staff will to try to contact parent/carer/emergency contact. ***Parents or carers should expect to pay a charge to use this facility. The charge for this adhoc service is currently £24.00.*** If contact has not been made 30 minutes after the end of the school day (i.e. 3:40pm/3:45pm), police will be alerted via 101 and the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020- 8545-4227 will be phoned if the child is a Merton resident, or the children's social care department for their home Local Authority.

All pupils - who usually attend after school childcare provision – Staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer/emergency contact up to 30 minutes after the official closing time of the provision (i.e. 6:30pm) After 30 minutes, following alerting police on 101, if the child is a Merton resident call the Children and Families Hub 020-8545-4226 or 020-8545-4227. If the child is not a Merton resident staff will contact the children's social care department for their home Local Authority.

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:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a referral to support services or social care to ensure the child is safe.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that 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, early help. The school nurse, social services or other agencies
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team 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 school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels verbally in parents' meeting each term and in the end of year reports.

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 to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave. Usually only relevant to secondary age pupil
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The head teacher and Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, **at least 4 weeks before the absence**, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via https://www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk/parents-and-carers/attendance-and-absence/

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has 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 the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the fine is £160 payable within 28 days reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay will usually result in prosecution under s444 Education Act 1996

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the fine is £160 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay will usually result in prosecution under s444 Education Act 1996

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is

met for a third time within those 3 years the matter will usually proceed to prosecution under s444 Education Act 1996.

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 to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.
https://www.merton.gov.uk/system/files/Code%20of%20Conduct%20with%20effect%20from%2019th%20August%202024.pdf

6. Strategies for promoting attendance
St John Fisher promote excellent attendance using positive reinforcements including:
Weekly awards for highest attending class
Celebration of good attendance through school communications channels
In school displays

6.1 Working in partnership with Parents/ Carers
Building respectful relationships with families and working in collaboration is essential to ensuring the best outcomes for children. We require all parents to actively support the work of the school, including promoting attendance and engagement. The school is committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place with regards to promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact if they have concerns about their child.

It is pertinent that school and parents / carers work together with a shared plan and outcomes when supporting a child's attendance and wellbeing. If despite persistent attempts to work with parents, there continues to be a lack of engagement, then legal procedures may be followed to secure engagement and school attendance.

6.2 Attendance Contracts
An Attendance Contract is a formal written agreement with the School, Parent(s), Pupil(s), and School's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The aim is to offer support by listening to the reasons for absence and difficulties that prevent regular school attendance during a meeting with the Parents, Child, School staff and EWO.

The purpose of the meeting it to set out an action plan to address the poor school attendance of the pupil with realistic achievable targets to be made within a reasonable time scale**. (See Appendix 4 for a sample Attendance Contract)**

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Part-time Timetables
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. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.

Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.
There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance
School will work proactively with parents to explore complex barriers to attendance and may draw upon in school support for example via the Inclusion Manager and/or the support and intervention of outside agencies depending on the nature of the barrier to attendance.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professional to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes public exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that 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
When a pupil returns to school after lengthy period of absence appropriate support will be discussed and offered via meetings with the HT/class teacher as necessary.

7.4 Suspension from School
With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see section 5.

8. Attendance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on an annual basis by the Head teacher/governing body. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8.1 Monitoring attendance
The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.
The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
The school will benchmark 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 share this with the governing board.
8.2 Analysing attendance
The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers], to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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 who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

8. Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

We have a legal duty to provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

9. Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Merton Park Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide us with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

10. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Relationships and Behaviour policy

Appendix 1

DfE Attendance Codes

DfE guidance states the following codes are to be used on the register. Further information relating to the application of codes can be found here: working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024),

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
Attending a place other than the school		
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
Absent – Leave of absence		
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
Absent – Other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are 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 (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably 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. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – Unauthorised Absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

St. John Fisher RC Primary School

ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY

The Governors of St. John Fisher RC Primary School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available from the school office) Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.

3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

ST JOHN FISHER RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024

- **Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.** (This is **not an automatic right** of parents/guardians)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and any supporting evidence provided.
- If the absence is approved by the Headteacher you will be advised as to how many days the Headteacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine/prosecution

In order for your application for absence to be considered please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren)**:** _____

Year / Class: _____

Home address: _____

Dates of absence: From _____ To _____

Reason for request **(additional evidence may be required)** / Who is travelling?

_____

_____

_____

Signed: Parent/Guardian _____

Email address: _____

Mobile phone number**:** _____

Date form submitted: _____

The above request for leave of absence in term time for _____ has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school on:

_____

Signed**:** _____ Headteacher/Principal: _____

School Data Checklist:

For School Office Use Only:

Pupil's name	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)	
Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
No of days granted (if any)	

Appendix 3

St. John Fisher RC Primary School Primary School Attendance Contract

Student's name	DOB/year group	Student's school
Parent/carer 1 full name	Parent/carer 2 full name	Address
Contact number	Contact number	
Child's ethnicity	Any SEND	Date
		Time (start/end)
Attendance during last 12 weeks	Sessions of unauthorised absence	Number of late marks
What are we worried about?	What is working well?	What needs to happen? What will it look like to not be worried anymore?
0……10		
On a scale of 1 to 10 , where 10 means (pupils name) is attending school regularly on every day the school is open and only absent in exceptional circumstances and when authorised and 0 means that (pupil's name)'s attendance is not improving, where do we rate the situation?		

Targets for pupil, parent, school and agencies	Date to be achieved by	Review of targets	Date to be achieved by

Date of review:

This is a voluntary agreement where all parties agree to work together to follow the agreed plan to support the pupil attend school regularly and punctually.

I agree to work together with school and the local authority to follow the agreed plan.
Signed: …… Date: …… Student's score ……
[child]

Signed: …… Date: ……. Parent's score …….
[parent]

Signed: …… Date: …… Parent's score …….
[parent]

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.
Signed: …… Date: …… School score ……
School

I agree to provide the above support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with the plan.
Signed: …… Date: ……. EWO's score ……
Lead professional/ EWO

Signed: …… Date: ……. Professional's score ……
Other professionals in attendance - List job title/role