



Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Effective: March 2023

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1. Aims

At Jolesfield Church of England Primary School, we are committed to providing a full and enriching education for all children. We believe that children benefit enormously from the education and activities that the school provides, therefore, regular school attendance is essential. Collectively, we do all we can to ensure that all children have high school attendance rates. We have a school culture where every individual is aware of their value and role to play, therefore attendance is promoted by all members of the school community. However, the headteacher, Vicky Price, is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance. Her contact details are: office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk 01403 710546.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Our target for attendance is a minimum of 96%.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
93-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-93%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance: 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

In line with the Code of Conduct for West Sussex if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week period a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to parents by the Pupil Entitlement Unit.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions missed due to, for example, illness, medical appointments which have been unable to be made in school holidays or other exceptional family circumstances such as a family funeral. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which authorisation has not been given. These include, for example, absences which are not properly explained, days off for birthday treats or due to holidays and planned family occasions.

Parents/Carers can not authorise absences. A note or phone call providing a reason for absence does not automatically mean this is authorised. It is the responsibility of the headteacher to authorise absence in accordance with the school policy.

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational or sporting 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50 am on each school day. The register for the morning session will close at 09:00 am and the register for the afternoon session will close at 1:05

pm. Any child arriving after the registration period has ended is deemed to have missed the first (am) or second (pm) session.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:15 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

To report an absence, parents can telephone the school office on 01403 710546 and leave a message on the school answer machine before 8.30 am or telephone to speak to a member of the office staff after 8.30am. However, the preferred method promoted to parents for reporting absence is through the absence tab on ParentMail. Unplanned absence can also be reported by sending an email message to office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents 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.

To report absence in advance for a medical or dental appointment, parents can either give a written note to the Class Teacher or inform the school office by either telephone 01403 710546, in person or by email office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk. In some cases, i.e. hospital appointment or if a child's attendance level is below 96%, we may ask for a copy of the appointment letter.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school might authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning time.

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to 3 learning days lost a year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 learning days a year

If registration at 10 sessions in a 10 week period is missed, due to unauthorised reasons, a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement Team at West Sussex, where upon a Fixed Penalty Notice could be enforced.

3.5 Following up absences

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When a child does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- If no note, email or telephone call is received from parents/carers by 9.15am then they will be contacted by telephone call. Where there is no response, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the code 'O', or a 'U' if a child arrives after 9.20am
- Should concerns arise over attendance then discussions will take place with the Pupil Entitlement Team. This may result in a referral.
- Any return to school after a long absence will be carefully planned by the school

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports to parents on their child's attendance record on the mid-year report and the end of year school report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

When requesting absence, parents are urged to consider that a school year equates to 190 days. This leaves a further 175 days for holidays, family events, excursions and appointments.

DfE guidelines stipulate that leaves of absence during term-time should only be authorised, by the Headteacher in 'exceptional circumstances'. This is therefore rare. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was canceled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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
- Attendance on the day of a close family member's wedding or funeral
- Absence required, on compassionate grounds, due to significant, unplanned and unavoidable family emergencies

If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absence, for exceptional circumstances, they should complete the absence request form, at least a week in advance of the planned absence. This can be obtained from the school office. A leave of absence would only be requested on the understanding that supporting evidence may be requested and may be invited to meet with the Headteacher.

- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences, a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.

4.2 Legal sanctions

In line with the Code of Conduct for West Sussex if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week period a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to parents by the Pupil Entitlement Unit. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The Headteacher follows the West Sussex Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year, including lateness
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Jolesfield promotes good attendance through:

- Drawing attention to the excellent outcomes produced by consistently high attendance and sharing guidance through newsletters
- Reporting to parents their child's attendance at parents' evenings and through an annual school report
- Alerting parents if their child's attendance falls below the target of 96% and again, if attendance continues to fall below 90%
- Praising the resilience of children, who have continued to attend school and manage the discomfort of a mild illness such as a cold
- Valuing teamwork is part of our school culture, therefore every child is aware of their value and the impact an absence can have on others
- Having an Early Start Club to help those who find it difficult to enter school alongside a large cohort of children

6. Attendance Monitoring

Our school secretary, Natalie Saunders, is our attendance officer, who monitors pupil absence, on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning on 01403 710546, if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance. Pupil attendance data is stored on Bromcom and all attendance correspondence is filed by the school office and/or CPOMS (where appropriate). Stakeholders at Jolesfield recognise that early intervention is essential.

Parents will be alerted, by email and/or in writing, when a child's absence falls below 96%. A second email is shared if attendance falls below 90%. Once concerns regarding lateness or attendance are raised, class teachers move swiftly to meet with parents and supportively explore barriers to attendance. If attendance does not improve, the Headteacher and/or Deputy Head explore with the family additional supportive measures including referrals and/or signposting to external services. If, despite support, a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Pupil Entitlement Team. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Informs parents in writing when attendance falls below 96% and 90%
- Shares concerns about attendance to the Headteacher at the time of issuing letters
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when fixed-penalty notices are to be issued

7.4 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. Class teachers are responsible for meeting with parents, when directed to by the Headteacher.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared and approved by the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Days of school add up to lost learning!

Attendance	Lost learning time	Explanation
100% attendance	0 weeks of learning missed	Perfect attendance Best chance of success Well Done!
96% attendance	1 week, 4 days of learning missed	Good attendance
90% attendance	3 weeks, 4 days of learning missed	Poor attendance Missing out on valuable learning opportunities. We are beginning to get concerned.
80% attendance	7 weeks, 3 days of learning missed	Very poor attendance We are seriously concerned and will make the Education Welfare Service aware.



Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Littleworth Lane

Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8JJ

Telephone: (01403) 710546

Email: office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Ms Vicky Price

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Colin Brookes

Dear Parents/Carers,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you, in accordance with our attendance policy, that your child's or children's attendance has fallen below 96%, the minimum standard for good attendance. Being late can also lead to a low attendance figure. The school day starts at 8:50am and registration closes at 9am. Therefore, arrival after this time is recorded, in line with statutory requirements, as a missed session. 96% attendance across an academic year reflects 8 teaching days lost.

In line with the Code of Conduct for West Sussex if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 school week period a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to parents.

I completely understand that reasons for absence might include significant unavoidable, authorised absences such as a period of illness or a close family bereavement. However, where this is not the case, we would like to work with you and offer our encouragement to ensure your child's attendance returns to at least 96%, the minimum standard for good attendance.

Therefore, if there are barriers to attendance which you would like to discuss, please speak to your child's class teacher, our learning mentor, Mrs Partridge, our SENDco, Mr Brookes or myself as soon as possible.

Many thanks,
Vicky Price

Appendix 4



Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Littleworth Lane

Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8JJ

Telephone: (01403) 710546

Email: office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Ms Vicky Price

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Colin Brookes

Dear Parents/Carers,

The purpose of this letter is to let you know, in accordance with our attendance policy, that your child's or children's attendance has fallen below 90%. Being late can also lead to a low attendance figure. The school day starts at 8:50am and registration closes at 9am. Therefore, arrival after this time is recorded, in line with statutory requirements, as a missed session. Attendance below 90% is regarded by the Government as persistent absenteeism as it represents a significant loss of learning time of at least 3 weeks, impacting on progress and attainment.

In line with the Code of Conduct for West Sussex if a child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 school week period a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to parents.

I completely understand that reasons for absence might include significant unavoidable, authorised absences such as a period of illness or a bereavement. However, where this is not the case, we would like to work with you and offer our encouragement to ensure your child's attendance returns to at least 96%, the minimum standard for good attendance.

Therefore, if there are barriers to attendance which you would like to discuss, please speak to your child's class teacher, our learning mentor, Mrs Partridge, our SENDco, Mr Brookes or myself as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

Vicky Price

