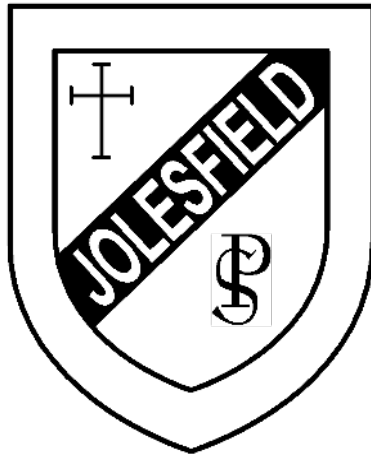




Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body/Trustees on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 22nd September 2026. It is due for review on 22nd September 2027.

Headteacher: Vicky Price
Policy date: 22.09.26
Review date: 22.09.27

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1. Aims

At Jolesfield Church of England Primary School, improving school attendance is a shared responsibility, and a priority that underpins every child's right to learn, thrive and achieve. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity possible.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Promote a positive and welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Promote strong attendance to support pupils' achievement by maintaining the highest possible standards of attendance and punctuality.
- Acknowledge the vital role all staff play in encouraging and sustaining good attendance.
- Establish a clear system for monitoring and responding to pupil absence, taking prompt action to address emerging patterns.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with families to ensure pupils receive the support they need to attend school regularly.
- Encourage effective support structures and champion multi-agency collaboration to improve attendance outcomes.
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities and that all children can access the education to which they are entitled.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the statutory guidance of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

It also reflects the following legislation:

- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2026)
- Providing remote education: Guidance for schools (August 2024)

The government expects all schools to:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

The government expects all local authorities to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Work with schools in their area to remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact [Dedicated Schools Team link worker] to offer support to families who are experiencing attendance issues.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

The government expects all parents [*] to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so with good notice.
- Book any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.

- **A “parent” is defined as:**

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that they are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Jolesfield Church of England Primary School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone’s business. It is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents.

Role	Name	Contact details
Attendance Lead	Vicky Price	Office Jolesfield
Early Start Club Lead	Kat Partridge	
Attendance Officer	Debbie Smith	
Named Governor for Attendance	?	

The Governors recognise the importance of school attendance and promotes it through the school’s ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting their school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set the whole school culture on attendance and belonging.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Using data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with similar schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

The Headteacher will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their families.
- Communicate attendance expectations to parents.
- Make sure all staff know the importance of good attendance and receive the training and professional development required.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that it is reviewed annually.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance, implement effective strategies and review the impact.
- Share information and work collaboratively with the local authorities, trusts, schools and other local partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

The Attendance lead will:

- Promote and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Use data to analyse the attendance of different groups including young carers and implement early intervention strategies.
- Oversee the school's attendance management.

The Attendance officer will:

- Record reasons for absence.
- Follow up unexplained absence.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Support the attendance lead with delegated analysis of attendance and strategies.
- Oversee the school's attendance management.

All staff will:

- Promote good attendance in interactions with pupils and parents.
- Work to foster a sense of belonging with all pupils.
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families.

All teaching staff will:

- Accurately record attendance.
- Monitor attendance within their class.
- Play a vital role in promoting good attendance by noticing patterns of absence, speaking with pupils and raising concerns early.

We treat school attendance as a vital safeguarding issue, not just a pastoral or administrative matter. We expect pupils to achieve attendance of 96% or above wherever possible. This is a good level of attendance.

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

We request that parents:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Report any instance of absence by 9am on the first day and every day thereafter, if applicable.
- Inform the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return, following this with a note, wherever possible, for example medical evidence.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact negatively on their child's attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Work with the school to improve their child's attendance where necessary.

We request that pupils:

- Speak to a trusted adult if they are experiencing issues with their attendance.
- Attend all lessons on time and ready to learn.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance [Appendix 5].

4.1 Leave of Absence

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should **not** be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents who remove their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the

purpose of leisure and recreation will be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a fixed penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

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.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances.'

At Jolesfield Church of England Primary School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances.' We will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing within two weeks. Further evidence of exceptional circumstances may be requested to support a request.

Unless exceptional circumstances render this impossible, parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 1). Apart from in the most exceptional circumstances, if a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. The school will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests may not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A fixed penalty notice [FPN] request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. Details of how to do this are shared in section 5.3. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the parent or nominated adult must visit the school office to collect their child so a member of office staff can sign their child out before leaving. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site for an appointment without an adult.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or appointment, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school

is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness/evidence provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may invite our Dedicated Schools Team link worker, Lucy Colburn, to work along with the family.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) and West Sussex's policies regarding supporting children with health issues, [Supporting children with ongoing health needs](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Jolesfield Church of England Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice of one month to the school.

For religious observance, if a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) page 86

4.4 Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.5 Unauthorised Absence

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. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation which is accepted as such by the school. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not restricted to:

- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Shopping trips or day trips.

- The pupil's or a family member's birthday.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend [see Appendix 3 for NHS guidance]
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U' code. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

5. Our Procedures

5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2024 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised by the headteacher.
 - The school day begins at 8:40am
 - Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50am.
 - The morning register is taken at 8:50am and closes at 9:20am
 - The afternoon register is taken at 1pm.
 - The afternoon register will close at 1:30pm.

Registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

On each occasion when the register is taken, the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the

delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence. Any child arriving after the registration period has ended is deemed to have missed the first (am) or second (pm) session.

5.2 Reporting to Parents

A copy of a child's attendance will be shared at Parents' Evenings and through the annual report. In addition, 'alert' letters are shared half-termly where a child's attendance has dropped below 96%.

We understand that attendance may be more complex for some families and barriers to attendance go beyond the school gate. As such, we will communicate with parents about school attendance in a supportive manner by:

- Setting clear expectations of good attendance.
- Building positive relationships with families.
- Using supportive language and working collaboratively with families.
- Sharing clear and relevant facts about the impact of missed lessons on pupil outcomes.
- Outlining the benefits of regular school attendance.
- Recognising efforts and improvements with attendance.
- Supporting families to access further advice and guidance when required.

5.2 Late Arrival at School

The school day begins at 8:50am and all pupils can arrive from 8:40am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this time to assist with a smooth transition to lessons/first lesson of the day/tutor time. All pupils arriving after registration are required to report to the main office with their parents to give a reason for lateness. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 with parental permission to walk to school must report to the office unaccompanied if arriving after 8:50am. If their arrival is before 9:20am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:20am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code otherwise referred to as 'Late after the close of register'. This is classified as an *unauthorised* absence for the session. The school will work with parents to address any patterns or repeated instances of late arrival.

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

5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school, parents are expected to contact school on the morning of the **first** day of absence and on **each subsequent day**, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. 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 9am.

To report an absence, parents can telephone the school office on 01403 710546 option 1 and leave a message on the school answer machine before 8.30 am or telephone to speak to a

member of the office staff between 8.30am and 9am. However, the preferred method promoted to parents for reporting absence is through the ParentMail app. Alternatively email office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk before 9am on the first day of an unplanned absence.

If no contact is received, then the school's absence protocols will be initiated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:20am and where no reason for absence is known.
- Parents of children, who are known to walk to school independently in Year 5&6, will be contacted as soon as practically possible between 9am and 9:20am.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning after 9:20am. If no response is received, the child's named emergency contacts will be telephoned.
- For safeguarding purposes, a home visit may be conducted if school is unable to get hold of a parent due to their child's absence.
- School will contact the parent if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Invite a child to join Early Start Club
- Investigate barriers to school attendance and work collaboratively with families on this issue.
- Discuss Learning Mentoring if this would help to overcome barriers to attendance
- Refer to Dedicated Schools Team [DST] link worker for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through [West Sussex - Integrated Front Door \[IFD\]](#)
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Issue a Notice to Improve letter to parents
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.
- In line with DfE's guidance on ('Providing remote education') remote education should only be used as a last resort and as part of a reintegration plan.

5.4 Attendance Recognition & Interventions

Jolesfield Church of England Primary School is committed to promoting good attendance. The school is committed to fostering a sense of belonging. The school does this in multiple ways such as through our RSE curriculum, house system, pupil groups and shared values. The school is committed to ensuring all pupils feel valued. The primary method of achieving this is through relationships. All staff strive to know all pupils and systems such as weekly staff briefings with Child Spot as a fixed agenda item help to ensure children are kept at the centre.

Where attendance is a concern, class teachers will initially discuss this. If concerns persist, the Headteacher will discuss this with the family. On-going meetings will take place involving other staff, where appropriate, for example, our Learning Mentor, Kat Partridge and external professionals, for example, Lucy Colburn, our Dedicated Schools Link Worker. Communication is logged using the attendance tag on our CPOMS system to ensure actions and progress can be monitored. Communication is key and where barriers are identified steps are taken to address them and impact reviewed.

Attendance is an on-going dialogue between the Attendance Officer, Debbie Smith and the Attendance Lead, Vicky Price. In addition, every child's attendance is more formally reviewed every half term. This includes not only looking at raw data but looking for patterns. Letters are shared where attendance has dropped below 96% and actions are decided upon.

Monitor and Analyse attendance

- The Attendance Officer monitors and analyses weekly attendance patterns and trends. The Attendance Lead is notified of any emerging patterns of concern. In addition, the Attendance Lead conducts a deeper attendance dive every half term and uses this data to identify and plan the implementation of intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- The Attendance Lead uses this analysis to further explore attendance patterns, provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors/senior leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and their families.
- The Attendance Lead, on a half-term basis, compares attendance data (at whole school, year group/cohort level) against similar schools [DfE reports] and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- The Attendance Lead devises specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data and monitor the impact of school wide attendance initiatives and use the findings to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- The Attendance Lead provides data and reports to support the monitoring work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.
- The Attendance Lead and, where relevant other staff, work collaboratively with the Local Authority and external agencies to evaluate reasons for absence and implement strategies to support families to minimise instances of their child's absence.

5.5 Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns, housing issues, mental health concerns etc. This will help the school to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to achieve good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child. This will depend on the barrier identified.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Facilitating access to Early Start Club or Wraparound Care

- Signposting to financial support if this is an underpinning barrier to attendance
- Learning Mentoring and other support strategies appropriate to Emotionally-Based School Avoidance if this is identified as a factor
- Consultation with the school nurse if a medical condition is a concern
- Neuro-friendly techniques personalised to the child such as a 'soft start' or arrival through a different area of the school may be appropriate if neurodivergence is a contributing factor

We value early intervention, clear communication and collaboration.

If your child is struggling to attend, parents should reach out to the class teacher initially to establish what help and adjustments can be put in place.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

5.6 Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

At Jolesfield Church of England Primary School, we will investigate any pupils whose data suggests that they are becoming persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

- Persistent absence (PA) is when a child misses 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.
- Severe absence (SA) is when a child misses 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could affect a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 190 sessions (95 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will initiate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. West Sussex - Integrated Front Door [IFD]

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings through a fixed penalty notice [FPN].

Fixed Penalty Notices

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI) on behalf of the county council holds the power to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when evidence of an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996 is apparent.

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a time limited offer (which lasts 28 days) for a parent to accept their liability for the offence under S.444 Education Act 1996; failure to secure the regular attendance at school of their child.

The offence is evidenced by the school recording unauthorised absence from school, or in other words, the school cannot or has not given permission for the child to be off school.

Headteachers may not grant any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Only a headteacher can authorise an absence from school and they do so based upon information known to the school or offered by the parent. There is no requirement on a headteacher to consider information offered after the fact.

Irregular attendance or an unauthorised leave of absence can result in parents being issued a Penalty Notice.

All FPNs are issued in accordance with the published Code of Conduct (see document below) and in line with the governments national framework relating to Penalty Notices Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know - The Education Hub.

When a Penalty Notice is issued

Where unauthorised absence relates to a term-time holiday of 15 school days or more, the use of an FPN may not be considered appropriate. In these cases, the matter may instead be referred directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider the use of an FPN when a child has missed 10 or more unauthorised sessions within a 10 school week period. A session is defined as a morning or afternoon attendance at school.

While the National Framework for FPNs advises that this threshold should normally be met before enforcement action is taken, it also allows for discretion in cases where the number of unauthorised sessions is lower. For example, an FPN may still be issued where there is evidence that parents have taken steps to avoid accountability, such as arranging absence to coincide with INSET days or bank holidays. In such circumstances, an FPN may be issued for fewer than 10 sessions where there is clear evidence that the absence was deliberate, avoidable and knowingly unauthorised.

An FPN may also be issued if a pupil who is excluded or suspended is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

In exceptional circumstances, an FPN may be issued outside of these criteria where it is considered appropriate and proportionate to do so.

Should the period of unauthorised absence be for a holiday in term time, which is for 15 school days or more, the use of an FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead, the matter may be brought directly before the Magistrates Court.

Cost of a Penalty Notice

An FPN is issued to each parent or carer for each child at the rate of £160 and must be paid within 28 days. If this is the first FPN in a rolling 3-year period, a parent or carer will be given the opportunity to pay at a reduced rate of £80 so long as payment is made in the first 21 days.

For a second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent of the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the fine amount will be £160 if paid within 28 days and there is no opportunity to pay at the lower £80 amount.

Penalty Notices are capped to 2 FPNs within any 3 year period. Once this limit has been reached, the county council will either prosecute the parent or consider allocating an Investigating Officer.

A parent must pay the whole amount owed in one payment; a parent cannot pay in installments or just pay part of the Penalty Notice.

Appealing a Fixed Penalty Notice

There is no right of appeal to the offer of an FPN, because it is a time limited offer for a parent to accept their liability for the offence. A parent can either choose to take up the offer or not.

Once issued, an FPN can only be withdrawn in line with the requirements of the published Code of Conduct (see document below). Should a parent feel the permitted criteria exists, they should contact our offices.

6. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding and child protection.
- Medical needs.
- Admissions.
- Anti-bullying.
- Exclusion.
- Special educational needs.
- Teaching and learning.
- Behaviour.

7. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE \(2024\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(2025\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(2026\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(2026\)](#)
- [A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance, DfE \[2026\]](#)

- [Providing remote education: guidance for schools \(August 2024\)](#)

8. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: leave of absence request and school response form

JOLESFIELD C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The law **does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time**. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives.

Permission must be sought at least 7 days in advance, through the completion of this form and must be for **exceptional circumstances**. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent who does and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider: the reason for the leave, the time and duration of the leave, whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods, your child's record of attendance and the learning that will be missed.

Please do not be offended if asked to provide evidence for certain types of absence request – this is so we comply with national, statutory guidance.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Pupil Entitlement Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £160 per parent per child (or £80 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Name of Child	Class
Is this the first request for absence this academic year?	YES/ NO
Dates requested	Number of Days
Reasons for seeking absence during school time - please detail why you consider this to be an exceptional circumstance	
Please supply any supporting documentation as proof.	

Signed	Date
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SCHOOL OFFICE TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION	
Teacher:	Teacher aware:
Current attendance: %	
Your request is approved and the absences as set out above is duly authorised ☐	Your request is not approved and the absences as set out above is duly unauthorised . ☐
Reason:	
Signed	Date

ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE

Important: please read carefully the information below.

Warning: If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued a £60/120 Penalty Fine, per parent, per child.

As a Parent/Carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

The Facts	The Law
We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates. What you should consider There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as: • Closeness to exams or tests (Standard Attainment Tests in Year 2, 6 and 9). • During the first year at a new school. • At the beginning of a new school term. If the school refuses a request for term time leave and	The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides. If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance. If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1st September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should

the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to a £60/120 fine per parent, for each child.	determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.
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Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons: • Genuine illness • Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) • Days of religious observance • Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement • Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces • External examinations • When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand	Other absence from school will not be authorised: • For any type of shopping • Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents • Birthdays • Resting after a late night • Relatives visiting or visiting relatives • Because holidays are cheaper in term time • More than one day for a family wedding.
The law requires schools to be open to pupils for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.	

Appendix 2: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school as much as possible and identify at least 96% as a good level of attendance.

How can I support my child's attendance and punctuality?

- Ensure your child arrives early or on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in class/form time ready to be registered by 8:50am.
- If your child appears to be only moderately unwell, send them to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates [see NHS guidance overleaf]
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

What should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

'On the day' absences:

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using the contact details in this policy to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name,

class, year/tutor group and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via [insert school email address]. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been approved or not approved.

What is the impact on my child of missing school?

Missing school has an impact on children's learning and social relationships. Absence may lead to children missing blocks of learning or having sequences of learning broken, which makes it harder to embed new knowledge and make connections. Therefore, apart from in situations of illness or exceptional circumstances attending school is vital.

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.

Is my child too ill for school?

Does your child have a high temperature (38°C or more)?

YES Keep them off school until it goes away.

NO Follow the guidance below.

Your child can usually go to school with a mild cough or cold if they are otherwise well. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day and give them the reason.

Should go in	Should go in (let the school know)	Seek treatment before returning to school	Keep them off (at first)
A cough, cold or sore throat Fine with slight cough or common cold symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat or headache, as long as they're otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. Threadworms Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.	Cold sores Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels. Conjunctivitis Fine unless they are feeling very unwell. Seek advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly. Head lice & nits You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP. Hand, foot & mouth disease If they seem well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly. Slapped cheek syndrome Once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. Let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.	Impetigo They'll need treatment from a pharmacist or GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school. Ringworm See your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment. Scarlet fever They'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics. Chickenpox Keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.	Ear infection If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away. Measles They'll need to see a GP. Call the GP surgery before you go in, as measles can spread to others easily. Keep your child off school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. They should also avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system. Vomiting & diarrhoea Stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea due to illness for at least 2 days (48 hours).

Feeling worried or anxious: It's normal for any of us to feel worried sometimes. We may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping. Avoiding school can sometimes make a child's worries about going to school worse. If your child is struggling, please speak to school as soon as possible to explore available help. If your child is still struggling and it's affecting their everyday life, you should contact GP or school nurse.

NHS guidance

Appendix 3: 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
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



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 Anthony Blakeman

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.

For more information on attendance, please see our Attendance and Punctuality Policy on our website. 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. If this is the case, please do not be concerned. 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, myself or a member of staff may be in touch to discuss how we can work together to help identify barriers and improve attendance.

Many thanks,

Vicky Price
Headteacher



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Telephone: (01403) 710546

Email: office@jolesfieldschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Ms Vicky Price

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Anthony Blakeman

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.

For more information on attendance, please see our Attendance and Punctuality Policy on our website. 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. If this is the case, please do not be concerned. 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, myself or a member of staff may be in touch to discuss how we can work together to help identify barriers and improve attendance.

Many thanks,

Vicky Price
Headteacher