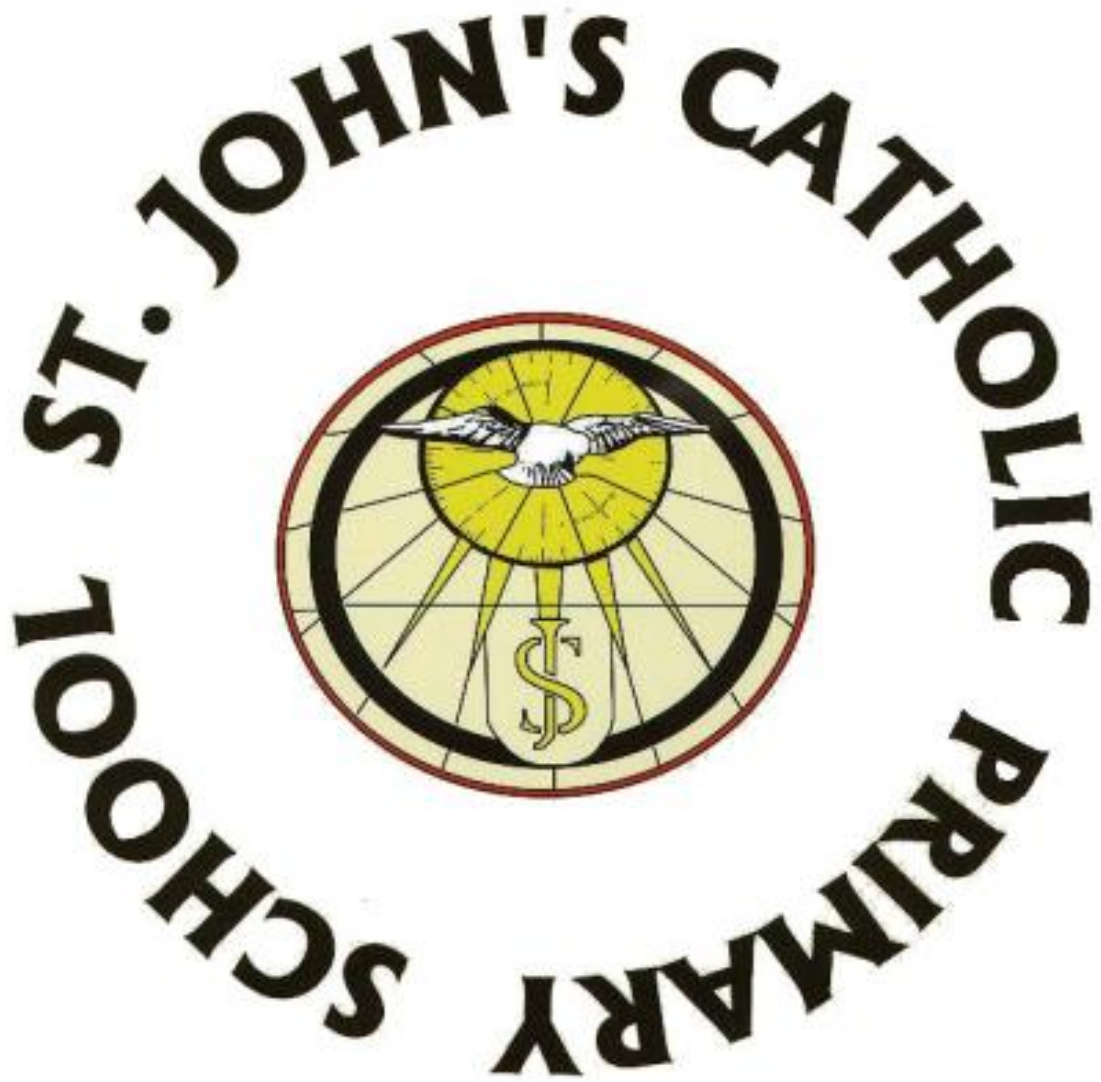




Attendance Policy

January 2025

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

- Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith
 - Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate
 - Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum
 - Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management
 - Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected
 - Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils
 - Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities
- St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge and St. Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon.

Rationale for policy

At St John's Catholic Primary School we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

This policy represents our commitment to support pupils to achieve 100% attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies to improve attendance and rewards and benefits of good attendance. The sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

2. Aims of the Attendance Policy

At St John's, our aims are to:

- Ensure that children and young people make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning
- Emphasise a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- Establish a consistent framework to improve attendance for all pupils
- Ensure that everyone within the school community understand the issues and procedures for attendance
- Fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance
- Encourage, recognise and reward good attendance

Responsibilities:

At St John's, we believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At St John's Catholic School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through regular communications through newsletters/website
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance

At St John's Catholic Primary School we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time, ready to learn
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly

3. Attendance: The Legal Framework – roles and responsibilities

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents this means registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for a formal legal intervention.

To avoid this happening we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence or those absences which the headteacher has not agreed.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Did you know.....

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year

90% equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year

80% equates to one whole day off every week in a school year

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

At St John's Catholic Primary School attendance is the business of everyone in our school community.

The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

Roles of staff:

Role	Name
Headteacher (Deputy DSL)	Mrs K O'Rourke
Senior Attendance Champion (DSL)	Mrs D O'Mahony
Attendance Officer	Miss L Byrne
Attendance Governor	Mrs D Perkins

- The Headteacher is responsible for improving and maintaining good attendance
- The Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer monitors and analyses attendance
- The Headteacher will maintain attendance profile through assemblies, staff meetings, monitoring, registration process, target setting across year group/classes, liaison with the EWO, Targeting Support Meetings parent/carer contact, School Attendance Meetings (SAM), attending Local Authority Attendance Meetings (LAAM)
- Class teachers will maintain accurate registration and discuss attendance during parent teacher meetings
- Mrs Perkins is the Governor specific responsibility for attendance
- Miss Byrne and Mrs Burden are involved in first day contact procedures

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment for the day
- Working in partnership with us to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child's education
- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance

5. Procedures

Our school attendance target is: 97%.

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day.

At St John's Catholic Primary School the register is taken at 8.45am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 1pm. The registers will remain open for 15

minutes. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

A pupil's attendance becomes a concern

A pupil has more than 3 weeks where they haven't achieved full attendance in a term (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)

A pupil has more than 3 recorded Late marks in a term

A pupil has a regular pattern of absence

Parents are asked to:

- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should make contact with school before the start of the school day. Please phone the school office on 01225 752006.
- Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival. When a child arrives late in school, the adult will fill in a Late Slip.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

Going shopping with parents

Birthdays

Minding other younger children in the family

Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell

Day trips and holidays in term time

Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration)

Truancy

Death of a pet

Processes:

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. The attendance manager will initially phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

Collecting your child from school

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.15pm.

If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school.

We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of.

If children remain uncollected from school the protocol is to call other contacts on the list.

Monitoring attendance

Fortnightly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Senior Attendance Champion and the attendance officer, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning. The Senior Attendance Champion, together with attendance office/pastoral manager will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially we will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an attendance meeting with a member of school staff where we can discuss the barriers to attendance and provide help and support to address that. We may ask parents to agree to an Attendance Contract which details how we will work together to improve attendance. However, if absence

continues and the support we have offered is not working we may make a referral to the Local Authority for additional intervention.

Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, leave of absence from school may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Absence for the purpose of a holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require 2 weeks' notice unless the absence is related to an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher, and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school or if the absence is immediately before or after a designated school holiday period.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

Consequences of persistent and severe absence

At St John's Catholic Primary School, we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns.

If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority where possible actions include:

1) The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to, including for a holiday in term time or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example, 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3-year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 2 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

6. Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

At St John's Catholic Primary School we take every opportunity to promote excellent attendance for all pupils. We will celebrate excellent attendance in celebration assemblies, and postcards home.

We are a caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered. St John's Catholic Primary School provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child. You can speak to Mrs O'Mahony (Inclusion Lead) by contacting them via the school office 01225 752006.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance. (E.g. Wiltshire Council, school health, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service, Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful we will discuss with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed annually by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

We will ensure that the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

8. Communicating the contents of the Attendance Policy

All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance in the school prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.

St John's Catholic Primary School Absence Table.

Percentage Attendance	Description of Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole days absent per year	Learning hours lost per year
100%	Outstanding	190 days	0 days	0 hours
99%	Very good – best chance of success	188 days	2 days	10 hours
98%		186 days	4 days	20 hours
97%		184 days	6 days	30 hours
96%	Good – although room for improvement	182.5 days	7.5 days	37.5 hours
95%		180.5 days	9.5 days	47.5 hours
90%	Poor – there is less chance of success and it makes it harder for your child to achieve	171 days	19 days	95 hours
89%		169 days	21 days	105 hours
88%		167 days	23 days	115 hours
87%		165 days	25 days	125 hours
86%	Very poor – attendance is a serious concern and there will be a huge effect on your child's education and learning	163 days	27 days	135 hours
85%		161.5 days	28.5 days	142.5 hours
80%		152 days	38 days	190 hours
75%		143 days	47 days	235 hours

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body on: 28th
January 2025

Head teacher :

Signed 

Chair of Governors :

Signed 

Review cycle:	Annually
Next review due:	January 2026