St James' Church of England Primary School

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Our Senior Attendance Champion with lead responsibility for attendance is

Executive Head Teacher:

Mrs Gina Bailey

Our Head of School is:

Mrs Casey Cox

Our Education Welfare Officer is:

Mrs Angie Brooks

What should I do if my child is absent from school?

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given. You are therefore required to contact the school immediately if your child is absent. On their return to school you must then send a note explaining the reason for the absence. You will be required to provide medical evidence from their 3rd day of absence.

The school office should be informed in writing of absences known in advance, such as medical appointments. If you wish to request a longer absence – (see overleaf) – please use a Leave of Absence form available from the school office or our School Website.

Where does your child's attendance sit on this table?

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100% 99%	190 days 188 days	0 2	0 10
Good	98% 97% 96%	186 days 184 days 182.5 days	4 6 7.5	20 30 37.5
Cause for concern	95% 94% 93% 92% 91%	180.5 days 179 days 177 days 175 days 173 days	9.5 11 13 15 17	47.5 55 65 75 85

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ATTENDANCE

An information leaflet for parents and carers

St James' Church of England Primary School recognizes that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment. Regular attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances."

September 2024

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Our Attendance Policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively, in line with Government and Local Authority requirements, and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers so that they are aware of their own child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

The school's Attendance Policy is published on the school website or is available from the office. We are always pleased to support pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance at school.

Understanding different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, and is a legal requirement.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, as well as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the governors, following Government regulations, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and fines.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to be registered (30 minutes after the register opens);
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- day trips;
- holidays in term time, including any arranged by other family members or friends.

Please see the Attendance Policy for full details of which circumstances will **not** be authorised.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

The law specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that "the need or desire for a holiday" is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

At St James, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... *being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time and cannot be taken outside of term time.*

It is important for parents/carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

The Department for Education has introduced a new statutory national Framework, that all schools in England must follow.

- There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued for an offence of unauthorised absence, the first will attract a fine of up to £160 per pupil, per parent (£80 if paid within 21 days);
- A second offence in three years will attract a fine of £160 per pupil, per parent.
- Schools cannot issue a third penalty notice in 3 years, and must consider other sanctions, which may include prosecution.

Please speak to the school if you need more information about the new rules.