

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

September 2025

Status	Statutory
Responsible Governors' Committee	Governing Body
Responsible Person	Mrs A Friar
Review Date	July 2027
Last Amended Date	March 2026

Introduction

At St John Vianney, we are committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality to ensure that every child has the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential. Regular school attendance is essential for children's academic progress, social development, wellbeing, and safeguarding. We believe that strong partnerships between the school, parents and carers and pupils are key to establishing positive attendance habits from an early age.

This policy sets out the school's expectations and procedures for managing attendance and supporting pupils and families where attendance concerns arise. The school recognises that there may be occasions when absence is unavoidable due to illness or exceptional circumstances, and we are committed to working sensitively and supportively with families to overcome barriers to attendance.

This policy is written in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including the **Education Act** and the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. The school also fulfils its duties under the **Equality Act 2010** to ensure that attendance procedures are applied fairly, and that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are considered for pupils with additional needs or disabilities.

The policy applies to all pupils on roll and should be read alongside our safeguarding, behaviour, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policies

Aim

To encourage the pupils of St John Vianney Catholic Primary School to attend school as much as possible in order that they might get the maximum benefit from the education provided.

Objectives

- To encourage maximum attendance at school
- To encourage excellent punctuality
- To develop in our pupils, a sense of pride in their attendance and punctuality

The school day

The school day starts at 8.45am. This means that morning learning activities and registration also start at 8.45am. External doors that children use to enter their classroom or area, will be closed at 8.50am. Children arriving after this time must enter school via the main office so as to receive a mark. It is essential that children are in school for the start of registration so they can access learning and there is no lost learning time.

The school gates are locked at 8.50am.

Registration ends at 08.52am; children arriving between 9.00am and 9.29am will be coded 'L' late on the register.

Children arriving at 9.30am or later will be coded 'U'. This counts as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registers close at 1.00pm

We take punctuality very seriously. If parents/carers do not address issues with punctuality promptly it can lead to legal sanctions such as a Penalty Notice fine.

Parents/carers of children who arrive late on a regular basis will be invited into school to discuss the issues and concerns around the punctuality of their child.

Parents/carers of pupils arriving late are required to sign-in using the Inventory system situated in the entrance area. Here the parent/carer must give a reason for lateness.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

All absences should be explained by the parent/carer before 9.30am or as soon as possible on the first day of absence (and subsequent days) via Reach More Parents, telephone call, email or in person.

School employs a 'first day response' system for chasing up unexplained absence: this is a safeguarding strategy. If school is unable to make contact with parents/carers, we may carry out a home visit to find out the reason why child/ren are absent. School will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence.

Parents/carers are requested to return their child to school as soon as possible after an absence even if there is only one day of the school week left. Children taking a course of medication should return to school as soon as possible, not wait until the end of the course. If a child has been prescribed antibiotics that are needed four times a day, school can administer once a medicines form has been completed by a parent/carer via Reach More Parents.

Absence from school **may** be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments (with evidence)
- Days of religious observance (with evidence)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Please note, even an authorised absence reduces your child's attendance figure.

When a child is absent from school due to illness, we will always ask if parents/carers have any medical evidence. **This is part of our attendance procedures and is not because reasons for absence are not believed.**

If a child's absence becomes a cause for concern, school will **insist on medical evidence** in order to authorise further absences. Families will receive notification of this by letter. If medical evidence is not provided the absence will be unauthorised.

The following medical evidence will be considered by the school:

- A signed and dated medical appointment card
- A copy of a medical appointment letter
- Sight of prescription medicine (must include name of child and date issued)
- Signed and dated 'Care at the chemist' evidence.

Parents/carers **will not be asked for doctor's notes that incur a cost.**

Absence from school will **not** be authorised if school are unable to accept the reason given by the parents. If school believe that the reason is not appropriate or has been used many times before, the absence will be unauthorised. Examples of this could be linked to siblings always being absent at the same time or the absence always falling on a particular day of the week and medical evidence has not been provided to cover the period in question.

Parents/carers of children with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be subjected to Legal Sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines OR prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Leave of absence during term time

School cannot authorise time off for family holidays during term time and parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays. The school will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents must apply to the Headteacher **at least two weeks ahead** of the absence. The Headteacher will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised.

For family holidays/planned absences, parents/carers should complete a 'Leave of Absence' application form (available from the school office or via Reach More Parents) and may be asked to provide additional supporting evidence, such as bookings and/or flight details and/or be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the application. It is vital that school know where children are when they are not attending school.

If the Headteacher does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents/carers decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised.

If the unauthorised absence meets the Local Authority (LA) Penalty Notice threshold as detailed in the LA Penalty Notice Code of Conduct parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice fine. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned. St John Vianney has made the decision to use Penalty Notice Fines.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

1. Parents/carers and pupils will be reminded regularly (via letters, newsletters, parents/carers' evenings etc.) of the importance and value of good attendance.
2. Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
3. Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern may be invited to agree an attendance support plan OR a Parenting Contract with the safeguarding team to help improve their child's attendance; this may include supportive referrals to the school nurse or a parenting course.
4. A pupil with an attendance of 90% or below is categorised by the government as being a **Persistent Absentee (PA)**. All PAs will be targeted for improvement. Parents/carers of PAs with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be the subject of legal sanctions including **Penalty Notices OR Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court**. Medical evidence is required the following academic year for any pupil whose attendance meets this criterion.
5. The school will support pupils who are absent through long term chronic or life-threatening illness by adhering to current government guidance for children with medical needs. This may involve a plan of support with home tuition and a re-integration plan back into school.
6. Teachers and support staff who become aware of issues which may lead to attendance difficulties will report the issues in a timely manner to the Headteacher.
7. When appropriate, school will liaise with other agencies – Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, the School Nurse and other agencies to support and help pupils and families with attendance difficulties.

Rewards for promoting good attendance

1. Weekly class attendance is displayed on each of the classroom doors.
2. Attendance certificates are awarded at the end of the half term. To gain an attendance certificate, a pupil should have 100% attendance.
3. To achieve a yearly attendance certificate, pupils should have 100% attendance.
4. At the end of each week, the class with the highest attendance receives the attendance trophy (Key Stage Two) or Sanjeev Bear (Reception and Key Stage One). Should the class attendance be 100%, extra play-time is granted.

Penalty Notices

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School have adopted the use of Penalty Notice fines to address unauthorised absence as stated in the LA Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Penalty Notices can be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where a child has a minimum of 10 school sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence within a ten-week period
- Where a child has 10 school sessions coded as 'U' late after the register has closed
- Where a child has 10 sessions (5 days) coded 'G' unauthorised holiday

Information for parents

- Parents/carers are informed of the school's policy on attendance and punctuality at regular intervals through the school newsletter and of the procedures for informing school about their child's absence/need for punctuality. A copy of the Attendance Policy is available to all parents/carers and parents/carers are informed when it is reviewed in school by staff and Governors.
- Attendance figures are recorded in the Headteacher's termly report to Governors. These figures show the percentage of attendance of the pupils and the percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences. These figures are also returned to the DFCS via the statistical returns that the school is required to complete.
- A pupil's attendance percentage, the number of unauthorised absences and the number of lates are shown on the child's end of year report.

Rights and Responsibilities

- St John Vianney Catholic Primary School expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive on time. The school will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism. School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality. The school will work closely with parents/carers should attendance/ punctuality give cause for concern.

Parents/carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring regular and punctual attendance and are responsible for informing the school as soon as possible about the reason for their child's non-attendance at or late arrival to school. Parents/carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed on their child's progress.

Pupils

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and are on time. Pupils will have their individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Attendance Monitoring

- Currently, Arbor is used to assist the monitoring of attendance. Information is manually inputted into the system twice daily by the class teacher.

Important document links:

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

Published: 29 February 2024

Applies from: 19 August 2024

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115222/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-19-august-2024.pdf)

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities

Published: 29 February 2024

Applies from: 19 August 2024

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