

**Attendance and Lateness Policy**

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# 1.0 Introduction

We at James Peacock Infant and Nursery School strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals, enabling all pupils to reach their full potential.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At James Peacock Infant and Nursery School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

If pupils are unable to attend school for whatever reason we **expect** parents to let us know this before 9.00 a.m. by leaving a message on the answerphone or via a phone call. If a child does not arrive at school, we will endeavour to make contact with you via text to ensure your child is safe.

# 2.0 Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that their child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised** and the appropriate register code will be used.

## 2.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

* illness, medical or dental appointments; (with evidence of appointment cards)
* days of religious observance
* exclusion
* family bereavement
* 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)

## 2.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child’s absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

* no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
* the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, I’m not well, I couldn’t get him/her to school, Gran’s not well, He/she had a late night, couldn’t get him/her up in time etc)
* family holidays (unless granted under ‘exceptional’ circumstances).

# 3.0 Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). See – ‘A Graduated Response to Absence at St Peter’s’ at the end of this document

# 4.0 Children missing from education (CME)

On day 1 of an absence a member of the office staff will text parents requesting information about the absence. If this is not responded to, on day 2 or at the latest day 3 a member of Senior Leadership Team will make contact with parents/carers initially through a phone call and if this is not felt to be sufficient a home visit maybe made.

From day 0-10 the school will continue to make efforts to engage the family and will keep a record of their contact. If there has been a history of Safeguarding Concerns or there is ongoing Social Care involvement, the MASH team will be notified.

Beyond day 10, if whereabouts is confirmed, if the pupil is still not attending education or engaging with school, a referral for Early Help through the Family Service (Pathway to Provision) will be made.

If a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown and reasonable efforts have been made to locate and make contact with the family a referral will be made to the Children Missing Officer (CMO). This will be no later than day 10 when there is no explanation for absence and the above checks have been completed.

In the case of school allocations, if a child has been allocated a place at school and they do not arrive the CMO must be informed within 10 days evidencing efforts to engage which will follow the same procedures as above.

# 5.0 Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from the school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes activities such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as ‘present’. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available. All absences will need an authorised legal confirmation letter from an appropriate leader.

# 6.0 Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. James Peacock Infant and Nursery School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by **9.00am** for the morning session and **by 1:30pm** for the afternoon session (dependent on year group)

The morning register closes at 9.05am***.***

* Pupils arriving between **9.00 and 9.05** will be marked with an **L** indicating they are late for school.
* Pupils arriving after **9.10am** when the register has closed will be registered with a **U** showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning.

 **This will count as an unauthorised absence.**

All late arrivals must enter via the front door and report to the School Office.

In considering attendance levels, the class register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

# 7.0 Monitoring and Management of Absence

The data which is extracted from attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

* support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a half-termly and annual basis;
* identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
* facilitate and encourage early intervention;
* identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc);
* match attendance trends with attainment trends;
* identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
* report attendance matters to parents/carers.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body are kept informed on attendance figures.

# 8.0 First Day Response

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a text. –we EXPECT a reply within 24 hours. A **nil response** will be classed as unauthorised.

# 9.0 Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at James Peacock Infant and Nursery School we:

* have clear procedures for start times and registers closing
* publicise this policy in school and communicate it to parents/carers
* balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
* praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
* ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons
* follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

# 10.0 Leave of Absence

There is **no entitlement in law** for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made **in advance** using the relevant forms which are available from the school website or the school office. Any request for leave of absence can only be authorised where school accepts there are ‘exceptional circumstances’.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised in these circumstances:

* during the first few weeks of any school year – this is a vital part of the school calendar for all pupils
* during an assessment/test period
* when a pupil’s attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence.

# 11.0 Absence for Religious Reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested **in** **advance** and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

# 12.0 Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child attends school. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil’s attainment levels and disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and if those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution as it does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued **per parent per child at £120.** However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60*.*

If a child has had more than 3 school days (6 half-day registration sessions) lost to unauthorised absence within a 6 week period the school may issue a Penalty Notice. In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued.

A child who has a record of attendance **below 95%** for the current or previous academic year, is more likely to have an application for leave of absence refused and very likely to receive a penalty notice if the amount of unauthorised absences exceeds the criteria in the paragraph above. Similarly, the greater the number of days that are requested for leave of absence, the greater the chance that this will be refused and the greater the chance that a penalty notice will be issued, regardless of past attendance record.

In cases of unauthorised absences and holidays, warnings will be issued where notice of the intended absence has been given. However if insufficient notice is given, **Penalty Notices may be issued without notice.**

# 13.0 Graduated Response:

We have a graduated approach to addressing attendance and punctuality concerns.

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| **What the school will do in any case of late/absence concerns:** | **1st Stage Absence/ lateness**  | **2nd Stage Absence/ lateness** | **3rd Stage Absence/ lateness** | **4th Stage Absence** **/lateness** |
| **Monitoring** | **Early intervention** | **Personalised programme** | **Referral to wider agencies** |
| **School trigger** | Attendance falls below the National acceptance level of 95% | If attendance rates decrease further below 90% | If under close monitoring, attendance rates do not show signs of improvement or attendance is below 85% | If under close monitoring, attendance rates do not show signs of improvement or attendance is below 80% |
| **Unauthorised absences at this stage could result in Penalty Notices being issued.** |
| **Communication with Families** | Parents will receive a phone call, text message and/or a letter and be expected to make significant improvement in the attendance of their child. | Parents will be sent a letter or phoned to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team. | Parents will be expected to engage in more intensive school or agency support. | If the late/attendance concerns continue, the family will be referred for wider agency support. |
| **Actions** | Attendance will continue to be monitored. | Any of the following **may** take place:* a home visit
* Checklist for attendance barriers
* Student questionnaire
* Student support plan
* Informal pastoral care (teacher led)
 | Any of the following **may** take place:* My 3 Houses assessment
* Non school attendance case assessment
* Support from school’s pastoral team
* EHAF (Early Health Assessment Form)
 | Any of the following **may** take place:* External agency support
* MASH referral
* Involvement from a Local Authority Attendance and Welfare Officer
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