



**DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER
ACADEMY TRUST**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Type of Policy:	DCAT Statutory Policy

Revision Number	Date Issued	Prepared by	Approved	Personalised by school	Comments
1	30 th Nov 2021	JP	LGB		Replacement of old policy to reflect academy's position on persistent absence

<i>Type of Policy</i>	<i>Tick ✓</i>
DCAT Statutory Policy	
DCAT Non-statutory Policy	
DCAT Model Optional Policy	
Academy Policy	✓
Local Authority Policy	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled ➤

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Our whole school attendance target is 97.5% and, along with the Local Authority, we consider regular attendance to be at least 96%.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local governing body

The local governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

3.3 The local authority (BCP)

The local authority is responsible for:

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Currently the school uses the MIS system Integris to complete this task.

3.5 School admin team

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Any amendment to the

attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See appendix 1

for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 must arrive in school between 8.30am and 8.40am on each school day. It is preferable for children to arrive at 8.30am so that if there is any traffic or other unexpected event the likelihood of being late is reduced.

Pupils in Years R, 1, 3 and 5 must arrive in school between 8.45am and 8.55am on each school day. It is preferable for children to arrive at 8.45am so that if there is any traffic or other unexpected event the likelihood of being late is reduced.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at between 1pm and 1.15pm depending on the year group.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/Carers can notify the office of an unplanned absence by calling the school office on 01202 426696 and leaving a message, by emailing office@stjamescebourne-mouth.com or by messaging the school through the Parentmail app.

We will usually mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carers can notify the office of an upcoming planned absence by calling the school office on 01202 426696 and leaving a message, by emailing office@stjamescebournemouth.com or by messaging the school through the Parentmail app.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phoning named contacts to ask for an explanation of the reason for the child's absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not ➤

Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

We will report attendance data to all parents annually in the written end-of-year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We generally define 'exceptional circumstances' as a family bereavement.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Due to the high early impact of absence on %age outcomes in the early part of the year, we formally begin monitoring all children's attendance figures from the start of Term 2 (end of October). However, where we have concerns about a child's attendance and feel a pattern is established, the school may begin intervention measures before this.

- When a child's attendance drops to below 94% we will make contact with home to flag this. 94% attendance is equivalent to a child missing 11 days, more than two weeks, of school in one academic year. We would expect to see an improvement in attendance rates after this letter. [See Appendix 2.](#)
- If a child's attendance drops below 90% we will send a letter home to formally acknowledge this, make parents aware and offer support. 90% attendance is equivalent to a child missing 19 days, nearly four weeks, of school in one academic year. Once a child's attendance drops below 90%, any further absence that occurs will be recorded as an unauthorised. Only on production of medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence will the school consider changing the absence to authorised. [See Appendix 3.](#)
- After receiving the 90% letter, if the child's attendance level doesn't improve over the next three week period, a second letter will be sent home inviting parents in to a meeting to discuss attendance and draw up an attendance contract. This letter will also advise parents that they have a 15-day monitoring period in which to improve their child's attendance to above 90% in order to avoid legal action. [See Appendix 5.](#) In the event of positive improvements, a letter will be sent to acknowledge this. [See Appendix 4.](#)
- If the child's attendance does not improve to above 90% over this monitoring time frame, a third letter will be sent to parents advising them that we are requesting a penalty notice (fine) and potential court action from the Local Authority. [See Appendix 6.](#) Again, if the attendance situation has improved, a letter to acknowledge the positive outcomes will be sent. [See Appendix 7.](#)
- In extreme cases or in situations where the school believes there could be possible safeguarding concerns or neglect happening, this process could be fast tracked and the local authority will be contacted to support intervention action on behalf of the child.
- [COVID Addendum 2021-22 – While Covid continues to affect the population and require isolation, all absence monitoring and parental accountability will isolate Covid absence from the figures being monitored.](#)

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognized and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools

7. Attendance monitoring

We monitor pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day that their child is ill.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

We collect and store attendance data in our school's Management Information System where it is used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		

C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 : 94% letter

Dear XXXXXXXXXXX,

As part of our regular monitoring of attendance at St. James', we wanted to write and inform you that XXXXXX's attendance for the year so far is below 94%.

We write to parents and carers when a child's attendance falls below this 94% because we are keen to work in partnership with all our families to ensure that each child attends well and has every possibility to achieve all that they are capable of. In very broad terms, 94% attendance is the equivalent of missing half a day of school every fortnight throughout the academic year.

At this stage, this letter is just to notify you of your child's attendance and let you know that we are monitoring it - there may well have been a period of illness or other reason that explains why the attendance has fallen. If there is anything you feel that we can do in school that could help to improve your child's attendance levels please feel free to contact us to discuss. Likewise, if you are worried about receiving this letter, we'd be happy to talk it through with you.

We are sure that good attendance in the future will improve your child to 95% and above before too long.

Best wishes,

The St. James' School Office Team

Dear

At St James' we monitor attendance very closely and believe that it is important for each child to be in school every day in order to keep up with their learning and realise their full potential. Our whole school attendance target is 97.5% and, along with the Local Authority, we consider regular attendance to be at least 96%.

So far this academic year, XXX's attendance is XX%. This is below 90% and falls in to a category known as 'Persistent Absence'. I have enclosed his/her attendance summary for you to look at.

If a child's attendance drops below 90% we send a letter home to formally acknowledge this, make parents aware and offer support. This is your copy of that letter. 90% attendance is equivalent to a child missing 19 days, nearly four weeks, of school in one academic year.

Now that XXXXXX's attendance has dropped below 90%, any further absence that occurs will be recorded as an unauthorised. Only on production of medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence will we consider changing the absence to authorised.

Now that you have received this letter, if the XXXXX's attendance level doesn't improve over the next 15 school day period, a second letter will be sent home inviting you in to a meeting to discuss attendance and draw up an attendance contract. This letter will also advise you that you have a 15-day monitoring period in which to improve XXXXX's attendance to above 90% in order to avoid legal action. The letter will also set a meeting to review the situation at the end of the 15 days.

If the XXXX's attendance does not improve to above 90% over this monitoring time frame, a third letter will follow advising you that we are requesting a penalty notice (fine) and potential court action from the Local Authority.

We realise that there are a number of reasons why a child may be off school and that occasionally periods of ill health do seem to hit hard. There are also unforeseen circumstances that crop up and mean that children may need to be absent from school. We would encourage you to keep in touch with school through the office to let us know if your child will not be in school for these reasons.

As well as informing school if XXX will be absent, there are a number of things families can do to improve their child's attendance. These include:

Ensuring family holidays are taken during school holidays and not during term time.

Booking medical and dental appointments outside school hours.

Encouraging your child to give school a go if they are a little under the weather. Often they feel better as the day goes by and we will always contact you if we believe they are not well enough to be in school.

As stated in the letter, we will now monitor XXXX's attendance for the next 15 school days and hope that we will see an improved outcome. If we can offer any further support, or if you have any questions regarding any aspect of this, please do contact me.

Kind regards,

Appendix 4 : 15 Day monitoring with positive outcome

Date

Dear

Following my letter to you on DATE, I am writing to update you on XXXX's attendance.

Over the last fifteen days, xxxx's attendance was xxx%. This is an improvement and reflects a positive outcome. We would like to thank both you and XXXXX for this turnaround and are keen to see this continue. It is important that strong attendance is maintained so that your overall percentage continues to improve and we get as close back to 96% as we can as the rest of the year progresses.

Currently, XXXXX's whole year attendance is xx% so we still have some work to do, but this is a positive start. We will continue to monitor this and will contact you again if we feel that there are any further concerns.

Please do contact me in school if there is anything about this letter that you would like to discuss.

With my very best wishes,

Kelly Leslie

Family Support Worker

Appendix 5 : 15 day monitoring with no improvement

Date

Dear

Following my letter to you on DATE, I am writing to update you on XXXX's attendance.

Over the last fifteen days, xxxx's attendance was xxx%. This is still a concern to us and represents a risk to his/her educational progress and future success. We need to meet to discuss this, please, and agree on a plan of action that will enable this situation to be turned around. It is in all our interests to successfully improve XXX's attendance and I would like to suggest we meet at TIME on DATE. If this is not suitable, please contact the office to schedule a more convenient time within the next week.

Once we have met and agreed a strategy and actions, we will monitor XXX's attendance for a further 15 day period once more.

In the event that you do not wish to meet, we will continue to monitor XXX's attendance for a further 15 day period anyway, and if there is little or no improvement we will have to move to our third stage which will be to request that the Local Authority issue a fixed penalty notice.

This is a last resort and none of us wish for that to happen. I hope we can work together to find solutions and improve outcomes for XXXXX.

Please do contact me in school if there is anything about this letter that you would like to discuss.

With my very best wishes,

Appendix 6 : Penalty Notice request

Date

Dear

Following my letter to you on DATE, I am writing to update you on XXXX's attendance.

Over the last fifteen days, xxxx's attendance was xxx%. This still represents inadequate attendance rates and subsequently I am going to contact the local authority to ask them to issue a fixed penalty notice. His/Her overall attendance this academic year is currently xxx%.

You have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school every day wherever possible and we have tried to work with you to help find solutions to enable this to happen. We are committed to continuing to work with you because our sole goal is to ensure that XXXX is in school so that he/she can receive a full education and reach their ultimate potential.

I would very much like to meet with you to discuss how we can turn this concerning situation around. I am available at TIME on DATE however if this is not possible for you, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative occasion during the next week.

I very much look forward to getting everything back on track again soon. With my very best wishes,

Alastair Brown

Headteacher

Appendix 7 : Penalty notice paused

Date

Dear

Following my letter to you on DATE, I am writing to update you on XXXX's attendance.

Over the last fifteen days xxx's attendance was xx%. This is an improvement and is positive to see. It means that for the time being we will not be requesting that the local authority issues a fixed penalty notice. I would like to thank both you and xxx for the positive actions you have taken to support improved attendance.

Although this is certainly good news, his/her overall attendance for the year is still xx% which is poor overall. It is very important that all of the work you have put into improving the recent situation continues and the overall attendance figure continues to improve.

We will continue to monitor this situation and if attendance begins to fall off again I will be back in contact to discuss the next steps, which could include the possibility of a penalty notice. I'm confident that that will not be necessary.

If there is anything more that we can do to support continued improvement in xxx's attendance, please don't hesitate to contact myself, xxx's class teacher or Mrs Leslie our Family Support Worker to discuss.

With my very best wishes,

Alastair Brown
Headteacher