

St. John Chrysostom Federation



Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 St John Chrysostom Federation believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.3 St John Chrysostom Federation values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties in a trauma-informed, inclusive manner.
- 1.4 St John Chrysostom Federation recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on admissions, safeguarding, anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Legal proceedings are a statutory intervention used by the local authority against the parents of registered pupils who fail to attend regularly at school. Parents whose children are on a school register and fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child(ren), may be guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the authority may take enforcement action through the courts to secure regular attendance.
- 2.2 Legal proceedings are not used as a punishment to parents for their pupil's absence from school; they are a supportive measure intended to make parents realise the importance of attendance and to avoid further absence from school.
- 2.3 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A prosecution can take place against any person who has parental responsibility for the child's education or who has care of the child. Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children are properly educated. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. If you allow your child to be absent from school without good reason, the school will not authorise the absence, you may be committing an offence, and you could be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted.
- 2.4 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 2.5 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 2.6 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.7 The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

3.2 Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places a child at risk of harm.

3.3 Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

3.6 It is also important for parents inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

4. Categorising absence

4.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 Absence can only be authorised by the headteacher/principal/principal/principal and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

4.3 Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carers, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

4.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

4.5 Illness Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the head teacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

4.6 Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

4.7 Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

4.8 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/form tutor/Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4.9 Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the head teacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**.

4.9.1 All requests for leave of absence are dealt with on an individual basis.

4.9.2 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

4.9.3 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates court.

4.10 Religious Observance St John Chrysostom Federation acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence.

4.11 Study Leave Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

4.12 Traveller Absence It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

4.12.1 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. This applies only when the family proves it is engaged in a trade or business that requires it to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

4.12.2 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

4.12.3 St John Chrysostom Federation will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at xxx will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

4.12.4 St John Chrysostom Federation can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

4.12.5 St John Chrysostom Federation will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

4.12.6 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

4.12.7 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

4.13 Late Arrival Registration begins at 9.00am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.10am, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, (code U) this is not authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.

4.13.1 On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

4.13.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

4.13.3 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

4.14 Unauthorised absence - Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the head teacher/principal.

4.14.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays

5. Deletions from the Register

5.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

5.2.1 St John Chrysostom Federation will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 St John Chrysostom Federation believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

6.2 The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

6.3 Staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

6.4 Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress

- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a written explanation.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head Teacher.

7. Using Attendance Data

7.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

7.2 The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.

7.3 Class teachers will receive a complete set of data for their year groups.

7.4 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

7.5 St John Chrysostom Federation will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

7.6 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

8. Support Systems

8.1 School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school to identify the anxiety-based school avoidance resources most appropriate for support and to accept the support that is offered or advised.

8.2 St John Chrysostom Federation also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

8.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies that may be used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Anxiety-based attendance avoidance materials
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Early help referral options
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages

8.4 Support offered to families will be child centered, trauma-informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

8.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs St John Chrysostom Federation will consider the use of legal sanctions.

9. Legal Interventions

9.1 Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

9.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

9.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of up to three months.

9.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

9.2 Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

9.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

9.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

9.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

9.3 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the headteacher/principal.

9.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

9.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

9.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Appendix 1

Manchester City Council Attendance in Education Toolkit COVID-19 School Attendance Policy Modification

Addendum to Attendance Policy for St John Chrysostom Federation

Context: This addendum is for use as children return to school in September 2020 and during the risk of COVID-19 infection.

This is in place to ensure that as a school community, we work together to keep us all as safe as possible; physically and emotionally.

Our attendance expectations are as follows:

To help keep ourselves, our friends and family safe, we:

- have extended the morning routine, door are open now from 8.30am till 9.00am
- have extended the evening routine – EYFS can be collected from 3.00pm
- increased cleaning routines throughout the school day
- created year group bubbles to limit the children mixing with other children

Due to the restrictions of 'Bubble Groups' being able to mix, references to time being spent in reflection by attending other classes, if 'time-out' periods are necessary it will be taken within the Bubble Group. In EY/KS1, the usual physical/interactive reminder of positive behaviour requirements cannot be used.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, there are some changes with regards to the registering of attendance when absence is forced due to one of the issues outlined below. In such cases, attendance is not expected and the register will be marked with an X unless stated otherwise:

- pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19;
- pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19;
- pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine – includes if a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in or return to the UK;
- pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown;
- local lockdown - schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown;
- if a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. This is because these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. **After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.**

It is recognised accepted that children and families may take time to adjust to a return to school and that there are additional considerations with regards to non-attendance given the impact that COVID-19 has had. As such, as a school, we are committed to ensuring that the following supportive steps are taken prior to exploring statutory action through the local authority:

Insert specific intervention actions that the school will take to address any attendance concerns linked to COIVD-19 (add more actions as necessary).

➤ each case is dealt with on a individual basis

➤ invite the family to engage in a formal discussion with a member of SLT and/or a member of the attendance team

Date agreed:	11.09.2020
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Approval: Governing Body	