



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by Governors September 2024

To be reviewed September 2025

Chair print _____

Chair signed _____

Date _____

Attendance Policy

Member of Staff Responsible for attendance:

Attendance and Welfare Officer, Miss C. Harrison supported by Pastoral manager, Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs L. Blackhurst and overseen by Head Teacher, Mrs L. Collins

Introduction

This policy represents our commitment to striving for excellent attendance and sets out principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance.

Excellent attendance and punctuality is essential if children are to take full advantage of the opportunities available at Joseph Turner Primary School to gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life and establish positive habits necessary for future success. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable children are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment, excellent attendance and punctuality are important qualities that are valued by others and employers. At Joseph Turner, we aim to achieve this by operating an Attendance and Punctuality Policy within which staff, children, parents and/or carers, and Sandwell Attendance Service can work in partnership. **We recognise that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility.**

All staff will encourage excellent attendance and punctuality, and it will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by pupils and staff. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified with effective strategies put into place to bring about improvement.

Joseph Turner Primary School has high expectations for all our pupils. If your child is missing school, they are missing out.

Schools have a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish attendance figures to parents.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence". Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of 'parental responsibility' lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer(s) and/or guardians.

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child
- Any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Objectives

- To develop and maintain a whole school approach that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To work with parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- To ensure vigorous systems are in place to monitor and manage attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- To investigate and act immediately where poor attendance is identified or confirmed and ensure quick and early intervention when a problem is identified.
- To work effectively with Sandwell Attendance Service, DT Attendance and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To closely monitor children with attendance, punctuality and Persistent Absences issues and to work with parents and/or carers and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.
- At Joseph Turner, we have set an attendance goal of at least 95% and expect all children to arrive to school on time, at 8.40am.
- To promote a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance, punctuality and values its partnership with parents/carers and the Attendance and Prosecution Service to promote good attendance.
- To continue to work closely with Tipton Learning Community Partner Schools, to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance within Tipton ensuring that **every child matters**.
- To encourage all pupils to reach their full potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others, enabling them to have a positive attitude to life-long learning.

Regular attendance also encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills, they will also inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place throughout the school year.

Every Lesson counts and your child's Attendance is linked to attainment. This is an example of the number of lessons your child will miss.

1 day's absence = 4 lessons missed.

3-day absence = 12 lessons missed.

1 week's absence = 20 lessons missed

2 week's absence = 40 lessons missed

Children should be in school, on time, every day during term time (unless the school is closed for INSET etc). Children should not be kept away from school without a valid reason.

Absence is classified, by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. To authorise an absence, the school needs to be informed of the reason why the child is not in school and agree that the reason given is valid and unavoidable. This information can be given over the phone, in person or in writing by an adult – messages from children will not be accepted. The school must be notified for the child's security as well as for administrative reasons. Parents will be contacted the same day (first day calling) when the reason for a child's absence is not known.

Roles and Responsibilities

Whilst everyone has a role to play in ensuring good attendance at Joseph Turner Primary School, Miss C. Harrison is our Attendance and Welfare Officer and along with Mrs L. Collins, our headteacher, who have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

The information below summarises the roles and responsibilities of the Attendance officer, parents, carers along with SLT and the governors. This applies to all pupils who are enrolled at Joseph Turner, including those who are persistently absent, or at risk of becoming persistently absent. Pupils are classed as having

persistent absence when they miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to one day or more a fortnight 5 across a full school year). Severe absence applies to children who are absent from school for 50% or more.

Attendance and Welfare Officer will:

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

Miss C. Harrison

0121 557 8733 – option 1 or email attendance@jtpschoo.org

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Ensure that the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy is clearly understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place, including SEND pupils and those in receipt of Pupil Premium.
- Work alongside the SENco to improve any low attendance of children with medical conditions or SEND, including, where applicable, access to pastoral support, the provision outlined in the child's EHCP, and support from wider services and external partners.
- Ensure accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, and adhere to the day to day processes in place to following-up absence.
- Monitor pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Advise DSL regarding a child with social care involvement, to advise of unauthorised absences and/or if they are to be removed from roll.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead when a child with an allocated social worker is absent.

Senior Leadership Team and Governors:

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion is:

Mrs L. Collins

0121 557 8733

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Mrs J. Cooper.

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school staff focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

Parents and Carers:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness), and on each and every day of absence thereafter.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

Attendance Procedures:

When a pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent:

- Work with the school and Local Authority (where applicable) to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support. When a pupil is persistently absent or severely absent:

- Continue to work with the school and Local Authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

When a pupil has a social worker:

- Work with the school and Local Authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered

Any child with an attendance below 95% will automatically be highlighted by the Attendance and Welfare Officer:

When attendance falls below 95%

- Parents will be informed as soon as a child's attendance drops below 95%. This will happen during the first day calling procedures. The parent will be told that their child's attendance has now dropped below 95%.
- An email will be sent to parents, advising them of the expectations and the importance of maintaining attendance over 95% along with the offer of support, if needed.

When attendance falls below 93%

- Parents will be notified via a letter that attendance is being monitored and if necessary a meeting may be arranged.
- Class teacher to speak to the child every day when they are in school and encourage positive attendance.
- If attendance continues to fall after 3 weeks, the Attendance and Welfare officer will take over monitoring and a meeting could be requested with parents/carers to discuss concerns.

When attendance falls below 90% (Persistent Absence)

- Class teachers will monitor attendance on a daily basis with an attendance card for a period of 6 weeks and the Attendance and Welfare officer will monitor and review the child's attendance on a weekly basis.
- Each parent/carer will receive a formal letter and a meeting will be arranged with the Attendance and Welfare Officer, this can help us liaise with parents/carers to discuss any barriers to attendance and if necessary, to put targeted support in place to remove any barriers, including working with professionals, both internally and externally from Joseph Turner.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and/or carers and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or little to no engagement, a meeting will be held with parents/carers, the Attendance Officer and the Local Authority and/r Early Help police officer, this could lead to legal intervention.
- The Attendance and Welfare officer will monitor the attendance cards where there has been persistent absence, discussions will also be held with the pupil about attendance including the "5 whys".
- During attendance sweep in the morning the Attendance and Welfare officer will check on all the PA pupils. If they are not in school, the Attendance and Welfare officer will make contact with parent and let them know what their child's attendance has fallen to.

When attendance falls below 85% (Persistent Absence)

- When attendance falls below 85% it will be a safeguarding concern, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be made aware.
- On the first day of every absence a home visit will be completed.

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as “severely absent”. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support. The attendance and welfare officer will be speaking with families of children, where their attendance is below 50% on a weekly basis to discuss support and barriers to being in school.

Persistent Absence

The DfE's guidance explains that, a pupil will be considered to be persistently absent if he/she is away for over 10% of school sessions in an academic year. This means that persistent absence is determined as anything below 90%. The table below sets out the estimated thresholds that will be used to define persistently absent pupils as written stated in the DfE guidance.

Table 1: Persistent Absence

Half term 1	3 ½ days
Half term 1-2 (Aut term)	7 days
Half term 1-3	10 days
Half term 1-4 (Aut and Spr term)	12 ½ days
Half term 1-5	15 ½ days
Half term 1-6 (full academic year)	19 days

Persistent absence has a negative impact on a child's education and, as a school, we do our best to engage with parents to prevent children missing out on vital education due to persistent absence. Attendance and/or punctuality cards will be set up with pupils as a reward incentive for them to come to school. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will also engage with the Local Authority Attendance and Prosecution Service for further support, in line with current government legislation.

Attendance Service.

- The local authority, will be monitoring attendance within Joseph Turner externally, and will advise accordingly regarding progression of cases to Sandwell Attendance Service.
- If attendance does not improve after an initial meeting with the Attendance and Welfare Officer, a meeting will be arranged with the Attendance and Welfare Officer and an advisor from Sandwell Attendance Service and/or Early Help Police Officer, If unauthorised attendance does not improve, the attendance service can advise to proceed with legal intervention.
- The LA may issue a notification of unacceptable attendance. This gives the parents 20 days to ensure attendance improves or identifies the reasons causing the absences and work with the school to address them.
- If the LA deems it in the best interest of the public, to issue a warning notice may not be issued and parents/carers maybe called to court, for legal proceedings.
- If there are any further unauthorised absences following the warning notice the Local Authority may decide to take legal action.

Attendance Register:

It is the legal responsibility of every parent and carer to make sure their child receives an education either by attendance at a school or by education other than at a school. Where parents and carers have their child registered at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all children. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school. The register must be marked using the codes as advised by the Department of Education.

Procedure:

The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. Joseph Turner will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This will be recorded using the electronic management information system, SIMS.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where school approves a child's absence) are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- Unauthorised (where school will not or has not approved the child's absence) are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the school, where the school has been given a satisfactory explanation as to why the child is away from school and that this absence is unavoidable. Parents reporting absence should give the reason. Regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school. For a period of extended absence, the school will seek advice of the school nurse and/or Sandwell Attendance Service and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by Sandwell Health Authority for the illness.

NB- Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation. Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and the child's past attendance record is taken into consideration. If a child has history of poor attendance, no absences will be authorised without medical evidence provided to school. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters will be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made. If a child has attendance below 90% no absence will be authorised, unless the school are provided with sufficient proof of appointments. Please note - Absences for head lice will not be authorised.

Joseph Turner Primary School may authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Genuine illness – time authorised will be according to Sandwell Health Authority
- Medical Appointment that cannot be made at any other time – copy of appointment card or medical letter will be required
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health and safety
- Authorised absence of sickness and diarrhoea will be agreed only if the 48 hour rule is adhered to (48 hours clear from the last bout of illness)
- Religious observance, necessitating absence from school
- Involvement in public performance, extended educational activity

Please note: Any absences without contact from parents or medical appointment cards/letters will not be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

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Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the school; this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Genuine illnesses or absence with medical evidence will only be authorised if medical evidence that the school deems sufficient is provided. Any absences below 93% will not be authorised unless it is in exceptional circumstances or a genuine illness where medical evidence has been provided to the school.

Joseph Turner Primary School will not authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Holidays
- Absence without a reason from an adult
- Absence where the explanation offered is unsatisfactory
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed
- Truancy
- Absence because another child / parent is ill
- Absence due to headlice
- Other leave of absence in term time, which has not been agreed
- Their own or family birthdays

Any leave of absence for a Holiday will result in a referral to Sandwell local authority, this could result in a penalty notice and/or legal prosecution in line with current legislation.

Referrals to Attendance and Prosecution will be made any time that a child has 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) within a 10-week period.

Repeated absence due to ill health may be referred to the school nurse for investigation.

Attendance cards will be sent home at the end of each half term for all children so that all parents are aware of their child/ren's attendance. Attendance figures will be available from the class teacher at each termly parents' meeting. You may also request a copy of your child's attendance, at any time, from the school office.

Punctuality:

School and home need to work together to develop good habits for attendance and punctuality.

Punctuality is expected throughout the year. Joseph Turner actively discourages late arrival by challenging it when it occurs. The school doors will be open from 8:40 and every child is expected in school at this time. Schools are legally obliged to close their registers at a specific time – at Joseph Turner all registers are electronically closed in the classroom by 9:00am in the morning at 1:10pm (12:20pm in Nursery) in the afternoon, as lessons start promptly at 9:00am and 1:10pm. All children arriving after these times marked as late and must report to reception to sign into school.

Continual lateness causes disruption to the whole class and hinders individual progress (especially where the same lesson / skills are missed every day). 2 minutes every day over 2 weeks equates to 20 minutes of missed opportunities for learning. The school day starts at 9.

If you are late after the register has closed, you will be asked to sign in using INVENTORY.

All late students are marked appropriately using code "L" if your child is late before the register closes, "U" after the close of register, at 9.30am.

When a pupil is late within a 3 week period, it will trigger a letter advising parents and carers that the late code will be removed and therefore any late marks after 9am will be unauthorised for a period of 6 weeks, during this time it will be monitored by the Attendance and Welfare Officer. This will result in a "U" code being entered on the register and this will reduce the pupil's attendance percentage. If a pupil has a total of 10 unauthorised absent marks within a 40 day period, this will result in a meeting being arranged with parents and carers to discuss the punctuality concerns. Should attendance not improve, a meeting will be arranged with the Sandwell Attendance Service and could result in legal prosecution.

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All lates and absences are noted on a child's record. Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the Attendance and Welfare Officer and the Local Authority Attendance Service.

Attendance Issues

There are times when children can be reluctant to attend school. This may be due to a genuine illness - however, there may be an issue at school that needs dealing with. By keeping a child away from school it does not address the issue (often making things worse) and it also gives the impression that their education is not important. If there are any issues affecting your child's attendance they need to be dealt with promptly with cooperation between home and the school. Please do not hesitate to contact the Attendance and Welfare Officer at school if you have a concern over attendance (School Office 0121 557 8733).

Attendance Service

Parents are able to contact the service directly if they wish to ask for help or information. The service is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. (0121 569 8147)

Attendance and Welfare Officer

The Attendance and Welfare Officer works in conjunction with the Local Authority to implement this attendance policy and procedures. The role of the Attendance and Welfare Officer is to monitor whole school attendance and support parents to meet their legal responsibilities. Attendance and Welfare Officer keeps in close contact with all families regarding children's attendance and monitors attendance on a daily basis so that early warning of attendance problems can be investigated and support can be offered. Any child that is persistently absent from school (attendance below 90%) will be closely monitored on a daily basis and reviewed weekly. Persistent Absences reports are produced by the Attendance and Welfare Officer. Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible, by law, for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend their school regularly. The Attendance and Prosecution Service works closely with schools to monitor and enforce regular attendance. If parents fail to co-operate with the school, the Attendance and Prosecution Service will arrange a meeting to offer support, if attendance does not improve, legal action could be implemented under Education Act 1996 and/or Children Act 1989. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will review the attendance of all pupils daily and address any attendance issues. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will make a decision regarding possible courses of action, depending on the individual family and circumstances which could be:

- Parent Contracts (School Attendance Orders) – enforce the parents' responsibility for ensuring that children of school age attend regularly.
- Home visits – discuss issues surrounding non-attendance and/or lateness in an attempt to solve the problem.
- Prosecution may be considered for further periods of attendance. All referrals to the Local Authority Attendance and Prosecution Service will be made following attempts to engage with parents. Please note: The Local Authority can access information from schools regarding pupils' attendance and may send correspondence to parents directly.
- 20-day notifications – to improve attendance.
- Parenting Orders (as a result of court action) – a legal requirement for parents to undertake specific measures in order to improve the situation.
- Education Supervising Orders (as a result of court action) – the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to parents and child.

Attendance Procedures

At Joseph Turner we are supported by Sandwell Attendance Service and Sandwell Local Authority Attendance and Prosecution Service which monitors attendance and lateness within the school. The school will issue half-termly attendance cards to all parents in order that they can begin to actively monitor their own child's attendance. The Government's target for Primary school pupils is at least 96%. In line with Government advice, the school sets challenging targets for overall attendance and expects all pupils to reach the target of 96%+ for each academic year. Children who fall below the agreed levels will be

targeted by the school and the Local Authority, in order to provide support and a possible solution to the ongoing absence. Any child with an attendance below 95% will automatically be highlighted by the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

Attendance Service.

- The LA may issue a notification of unacceptable attendance. This gives the parents 20 days to ensure attendance improves or identifies the reasons causing the absences and works with the school to address them.
- If there are any further unauthorised absences following the warning notice Local Authority may decide to take legal action.
- Issue penalty notices for irregular attendance.

Initiatives to Promote Good Attendance

Joseph Turner Primary School has considered initiatives that are most appropriate and always takes into account a child's individual circumstances. A number of different initiatives run throughout the academic year at Joseph Turner to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- There is a whole school attendance display in the main corridor which promotes good attendance and motivates pupils and classes. This is up dated weekly with current classes attendance percentages.
- Weekly attendance awards are presented to the class with the best attendance and the class with the most improved attendance.
- The class with the best attendance in the school, will be rewarded with the climbing frame on a Friday afternoon during playtime, for the winning class only.
- At the end of the half term, the class with the best attendance receives a cinema experience in the first week back after the school holiday.
- End of term certificates along with end of term certificates will be given to those children that have achieved good (96%+), outstanding (98%+) and Perfect (100%) attendance throughout that term.
- End of year certificates along with end of term certificates will be given to those children that have achieved good (96%+), outstanding (98%+) and Perfect (100%) attendance.
- Pupils with 100% attendance (or pupils who would have achieved 100% attendance if not for extenuating circumstances) will be invited an end of year pastoral event as a reward.
- Every pupil with 100% attendance will receive an attendance pencil at the end of each academic year.
- Every pupil who has achieved 100% attendance in a week and arrived on time each morning, will receive an extra 5 house points at the end of the week.
- Each child who has achieved 100% in a week proceeding when the whole school attendance was less than 92% the previous week, will be entered into a prize draw to win a book, one draw for EYFS, KS1, Lower KS2 and Higher KS2.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where there is evidence that a child has a medical condition, or diagnosis that prevents them from attending school regularly, or has been admitted to hospital.
- 3 yearly attendance events, each for a 9 or 10 day period, celebrating attendance, including themed non-uniform day, all pupils with 100% attendance during this period will be entered into a prize draw to win a voucher.
- The class with the best attendance for the academic year will have a reward afternoon.

Procedures for Reporting Absence

First Day of Absence – Safeguarding

- It is a parents responsibility to call the school before 9am on 0121 557 8733 to provide a reason for absence and an estimated length of absence. Parents are requested to ring in to school every day their child is not at school. Alternatively parents/carers can email attendance@jtpschoool.org before 9am to report their child's absence from school along with the reason for the absence.

- If school hasn't been contacted on the first day of absence by 09:00 (when registers close) the school will contact the parents (follow first day calling procedures).
- If absence continues parents are to keep school informed, if parents don't the school will call them every day that their child is off school.

Morning Attendance Procedures and First Day Calling

School Doors are open at 8:40 am. The school will use all of our entrances to ensure that year groups enter the school through their own area.

Attendance and Welfare Officer will check all messages before 9am and marks any absence on the registers. Attendance and Welfare Officer will also check emails from front office staff about night messages.

The following procedures are in place to prevent children being missed from the morning register:

- Once the gates are closed at 9.00am, parents have to sign children into school via the main school office. Any child who arrives after 9.00am but before 9.30am is recorded as late (L code – late before register closes) and after 9.30am they are recorded as late (U code – late after register closes). All children MUST be signed in before being admitted entrance to the school.
- Registers saved by teachers at 9.00am.
- The Attendance and Welfare Officer checks any N codes (no reason yet provided for absence). The Attendance and Welfare Officer will do a sweep of the school to check classes.
- All children that arrive after 9.00am that is signed in on INVENTORY must be inputted onto the SIMS system.
- All First Day Calling to absent children's parents made by 10.00am.
- Home visits are needed where a child is not in school, to ensure the child is safe and well. Home visits are to be conducted by school or our external agency, DT Attendance where necessary i.e. in a child's absence, where parents are not contactable, for any PA/Vulnerable pupils. All actions will be recorded on CPOMS.
 - Where a parent/carer has been in contact with school, each day and there are no welfare concerns, we will conduct a home visit on the third day of absence.
 - Where no contact has been made for 2 days with parents/carers regarding an absence, we will conduct a home visit on the 2nd day.
 - Where attendance is below 85%, and/or the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead has welfare concerns, a welfare based home visit will be conducted on day 1 of absence.
 - Where no contact is made during home visits for 3 consecutive days, a referral to Sandwell Children's Trust and/or a concern raised with the police, regarding a child missing in education. This could result in social care intervention and/or a police visit to the pupil's home, to ensure they are safe and well.
- No change is to be made to description codes e.g. M is for children with medical appointment, they are not to be coded as L or U if they have proof.
- Attendance and Welfare Officer will also keep a record of any mistakes made on the registers by staff and this will be monitored by SLT on a regular basis.

Medical Appointments

- Where possible medical appointments should be made out of school hours.
- If this is not possible, please try to gain appointments at lunchtime and inform the school in advance. Parents to provide medical appointment cards or letters to the office to be scanned and kept on file.
- A pupil attending medical appointments should be brought into school to be marked 'present' and will be signed out when collected by parents. If possible the child should be returned to school after the appointment and signed back into school at reception. Parents to only keep child away from school for the minimum time needed to keep the appointment.
- Medical evidence should be provided to school prior to the appointment.

Leave of Absences in term-time

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Leave of absences during term time can have a negative impact on children's progress.

New legislation now states that no leave of absence requests are to be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. If parents wish to take their child out of school for any reason, then a leave of absence form (available from the school office) must be completed prior to any arrangements being made. This will ensure that the school knows where the child is and the reason for absence has been recorded. Where parents believe that the request has been made due to exceptional circumstances then proof of such circumstance should be provided.

The Attendance and Welfare Officer will contact parents to discuss the reason for this leave of absence in school time, following this all information will be provided to the Head Teacher who will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

This decision will then be confirmed in writing to each parent/guardian. Government directive state that parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time.

Where parents/carers do not complete the leave of absence form and continue to take a child on holiday, the leave of absence will be unauthorised and will be referred to Sandwell Attendance Service and a penalty notice could be issued.

Any unauthorised leave of absences will result in a referral being made to the local authority who may decide to issue a fixed penalty notice/legal action against each parent/carer.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

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. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Sandwell Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

Penalty Notices

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school. This would include a number of 10 unauthorised absences (5 days/10 sessions or more of unauthorised absences), over 25 day period, or one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission. The procedure for the issuing of penalty notices is outlined in Sandwell Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action by supporting to reinstate a regular pattern of attendance.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- At least ten sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence ('O' code) in any consecutive half terms.
- Persistent late arrival at school, for example after the register has closed ('U' code).
- When there has been an unauthorised leave of absence ('G' code) of at least ten sessions (five school days) due to holidays in term time, over a period of 10 weeks.

When all the appropriate paperwork is received regarding 10 or more unauthorised absences, a warning letter is sent to parents/carers, indicating that a referral has been made to Sandwell Attendance Service. If any unauthorised absences occur during this monitoring period, Sandwell Council may issue a Penalty Notice and/or start legal proceedings to parents and/or carers.

An explanatory letter will be sent by Sandwell Council, to discuss the further legal action to parents/carers.

Children who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities have an equal right to an education. Therefore, the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil whilst also being mindful of the barriers that these children may face.

The Attendance and Welfare Officer will work with families and children to ensure that additional support is in place, where necessary, for those with physical or mental health conditions, including making reasonable adjustments, removing specific in-school barriers and accessing support from external agencies.

Some children and young people are unable to attend normal full-time schooling for medical reasons. Where applicable, the Attendance and Welfare Officer, will seek the support of the Local Authority (for example, the School Nurse) for pupils who are temporarily unable to attend school and who are physically ill, injured or have mental health problems.

Non-compulsory school age children

The attendance of non-compulsory school age children (i.e. nursery) will be monitored in exactly the same way as the rest of the school. For any child attending nursery, if their attendance falls below 90% then a meeting will be arranged to discuss their child's attendance and any support that school could offer. At which point they would also be informed that if their child's poor attendance continues, their place could be at risk. If the child's attendance does not improve over a period of 4 weeks the parents would be informed in writing that the child's Nursery place has been withdrawn and offered to another child.

The Governing Body

The Head Teacher manages the day-to-day running of the school and in doing so takes the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy. However, the governing body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management, including the attendance register.

School attendance is regularly discussed at every full governing body meeting. The governing body is kept updated on all attendance related issues and attendance data is presented to the governing body.

The school monitors and reports the school's annual attendance target and progress towards this target on a termly basis.

The named school governor for attendance is Ms J Cooper.

Sandwell Attendance and Prosecution Service contact details:

Telephone: 0121 569 8147

Address:

Attendance and Prosecution Service

Connor Education Centre

Connor Road

West Bromwich

West Midlands

B71 3DJ

Appendix 1

Daily

- Attendance and Welfare Officer to check morning messages for absent children and mark on the registers before 9:00 am.
- Front office to email if any other messages have been left and Attendance and Welfare Officer to add these absences to the register.
- All teachers to close registers at 9:00 am.
- Children arriving after 9:00 am to be registered at the front office through Inventory and pushed through to SIMS.
- Fire Register to be printed by 9:10 am.
- Print off absence report for that day and carry out attendance sweep.
- First day calling to be completed by 10:00 am. Any child with attendance that has fallen below 95% parents to be informed of this.
- Reprint the Fire Register.
- Home visits to be carried out for any children (with priority given to PA/vulnerable children) that we have not had an absence message for and recorded on the communication log on SIMS, in line with the home visit statement above regarding the criteria.
- Print out any letters for children that have dropped below 93% and 90%
- Print out and arrange meetings with parents for children that have dropped below 90%.
- Actions to be recorded and logged onto 'CPOMs'.
- Monitor all PA children's attendance cards.
- Attendance and Welfare Officer to complete first day calling for PM Nursery and all afternoon register to be checked by 1:20 pm.
- First day calling for afternoon Nursery children.
- Print out PM Nursery's Fire Register.
- Daily attendance % to be added to excel spreadsheet.

Weekly

- Assembly on Monday – announce and present trophy, teddy to the class with the best attendance and a certificate to class with most improved attendance.
- Mid—Week check on classes' attendance charts. Encourage children to think if their class will win the attendance star for the week.
- Monitor weekly attendance % on excel spreadsheet to identify patterns
- Attendance display in corridor to be updated on a Friday
- Individual pupil monitoring of attendance cards on a Friday.
- Attendance posters (update and display around school)

Monthly

- Attendance and Safeguarding meeting with SLT and Pastoral Team

Half Termly

- Attendance reward for best attended class to be announced in the final Assembly of the half term
- Cinema experience to be organised for the first week back after the half term for the winning class.
- Attendance cards to go out on the last day of half term
- Report to HT

Termly

- Report to governors

When required

- Attendance meetings (initial parent contracts, reviews)
- Attendance file to be kept up to date

Attendance Policy September 2024-2025

Review date September 2025

- Focus on hard to reach parents/families/PA
- Liaise with DHT re referrals to attendance and prosecution
- Checking Leave of Absence forms are completed correctly

Elective Home Education

Parents who are considering home education for their child need to communicate this with the Attendance and Welfare Officer. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will then discuss the reasons for this decision and advise parents that the child will lose their school place and will need to reapply through Sandwell Council admissions if they would like their child to return to a Sandwell school in future. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will also give parents a copy of the school's home education slip. The slip can be found below.



Headteacher: Mrs L Collins

Powis Avenue
Tipton
West Midlands
DY4 0RN
Tel: 0121-557-8733
Fax: 0121-557-6774

Home Education – RFR

This information has been given to you because you have expressed that you would like to educate your child/ren at home.

If your child is in school and you decide to home educate them, you must formally de-register by writing to the headteacher telling them that you intend to teach your child at home. Your child will then be removed from the school roll and the headteacher will inform the council. This will then mean that your child no longer has a place at Joseph Turner Primary School.

Please find the information for the home education team at Sandwell Council:

Email: Home_education@sandwell.gov.uk or call them on 0121 569 8147 for advice and support on home education.

The parent will need to provide a signed and dated letter to school explaining that they wish to home educate their child and need them to be removed from the school register. A template letter can be found below.

Mrs L Collins
Joseph Turner Primary School
Powis Avenue
Tipton
DY4 0RN

YOUR ADDRESS

DATE

RE: CHILD'S FULL NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH

Dear Mrs Collins,

I am writing to inform you that my SON/DAUGHTER – CHILD'S NAME is receiving education at home, otherwise than at school in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

Therefore, please remove their name from the school register as from the DATE YOU WISH TO LEAVE SCHOOL in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 2016 section 8(1)(d).

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE

YOUR NAME

The letter and RFR referral is then sent to the Removal from Roll team at Sandwell Council. The Children Missing in Education (CME) team at Sandwell Council will then contact the school's Designated safeguarding lead and request the child's safeguarding documents.