

# Jasper City School

## Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly and the school will work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. Children who are persistently late or frequently absent from school soon fall behind in their learning, developing large gaps, which impacts on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. **Non-attendance and lateness are important issues that are treated seriously.** However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case.



Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening or becoming habitual. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance. Jasper City School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education.

### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and directors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy promotes good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage pupils to have an awareness of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with issues.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially Teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents know and understand their responsibility for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff, governors and

trustees on school attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## Definitions

Authorised Absence = An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence = An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school, without good reason, without the permission of the school, even if the parent supports the absence.

## Procedures

### Parental Responsibility

1. Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parent's or carer with whom the child resides. Parents have the legal responsibility to ensure their child/ren attend school regularly and have good attendance, unless there is a valid reason that prevents them from doing so.
2. Parents should read this policy carefully, understand what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence (as above) and follow the procedure herein. Parents will be expected to sign an agreement to this effect, in the home & school agreement.
3. Punctuality is very important, as lateness has a negative impact on the learning of the individual child and can disrupt the whole class.
4. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full-time education and this is achieved by regular attendance at school. For Year Nursery and Reception learners, full time is 08.25-15.00 hours. For primary school children & key stage 3 students full time means 08.25-15.45 hours Monday-Friday. For key stage 4 learners, full time means 08.25-16.30 Monday-Thursday and 08.25-15.45 on Friday.
5. Parents should contact the school between 08.00 to 08.20 on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence, for example if the child is unwell. This should be followed up with a letter from the parents on the child's first day returning to school, stating the dates missed at school and the reason for the absence.
6. The school should have advanced notice of any medical appointments during school hours. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M) we do require evidence from the doctor, dentist or hospital (appointment card/letter).
7. Requests for authorised absence during term time must be absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised. Unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time is strongly discouraged.
8. Parents should talk to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and resolved.
9. Attendance is discussed with parents at parent & teacher meetings, with the current

percentage of attendance & punctuality reported.

## School Responsibility

The Senior Leadership Team will clearly communicate this attendance procedure and expectations to all staff, governors, directors, parent and pupils. All teaching and support staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Head Teacher holds ultimate responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Assistant Head Teacher and Senior Administrator. Where a school attendance and/or punctuality problem occurs, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

### 1. Maintain appropriate attendance data:

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the attendance registry.

### 2. Maintain appropriate registration processes, having consistent & systematic daily records which give detail of any absences and lateness using DfE attendance codes:

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents and must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date of last use. They may be called on as evidence in a court (please refer to our Registration Policy).

Class teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day, at the start of each session – 08.25 in the morning and 13:15 in the afternoon. The main school door opens at 08:15, this is sufficient time for learners to make their way to their classrooms and store their personal belongings before the register is called. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

Any pupil who arrives at school after 08:30 will be marked as late in the attendance record (Attendance code L). *Any child who arrives at school later than 09:00 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U).* Where there is persistent lateness, parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to receive support and advice to resolve the issue.

Children who attend a medical appointment will have the absence recorded using attendance code M.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we will send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by a specified date, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (attendance code O).

The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised and will do so based on the information that the parents provide.

### 3. Calls from parents regarding absences are logged.

### 4. Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents have not communicated with the school.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. After registration, office staff check all registers daily, to ensure that all children are accounted for. Telephone calls will be made to parents of children who are not in school, to ensure that children are safe. This forms part of our Child Protection procedure.

5. **Teachers** are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Head Teacher where they have any attendance or punctuality concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parent & teacher evenings where necessary

6. **Administration staff** in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

7. **The Head Teacher** is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Governing Body and Directors
- Report attendance statistics to the DfE where requested.

**Absence (evidenced) for the following reasons should be authorised**

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside of school hours
- Bereavement of close relatives (attending a funeral)
- Birth of sibling
- Family holiday that cannot be taken at another time (unless the child has assessments)

If absences from school are unavoidable and its appropriate, pupils will be provided with curriculum to complete whilst absent.

**Illness**

When children have an illness that requires long term periodic absences from school, if it's appropriate, the school will send material home, so that the learner can keep up with his/her school work. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of absence due to illness, the school will maintain a good relationship with the family and ask parents to provide medical evidence to show that further future absence from school is or may be necessary. This

evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card, copy of a prescription or hospital/consultant letter. We may seek written consent from the parent for the school to make their own enquiries.

### Family holidays during term time

Holidays requests during term time are strongly discouraged due to the inevitable disruption caused to learning. ***Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance.*** Head Teachers of Independent Schools may consider authorising absence specifically for holidays taken during term time. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body and no more than one period of holiday of no more than ten school days in any academic year will be authorised. When an application is made for authorised absence during term time, the Head Teacher considers:

- The age of the child
- The nature of the parent's wishes
- The timing of the proposed absence – will assessments be taken, does the child have a leading role in a school performance etc.
- The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years
- The attendance percentage
- The child's progress

When an absence is authorised parents will be provided with written evidence.

### Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured. We know too that regular attendance breeds commitment which is an essential trait for good character. Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance each term. This is celebrated in the final whole school assembly. The awards are as follows:

1st term, 100% attendance – bronze award  
2nd term, 100% attendance – silver award  
3rd term, 100% attendance – gold award

### Individual incentives

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance. Individual sticker rewards are sometimes employed as an additional incentive where appropriate; these are designed according to the child's particular need.

### Referrals to Education Welfare Officer

Any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve, will be referred to the Education and Welfare Service. If this is necessary, all further absences will be unauthorised pending an investigation. The EWO liaises with the school regarding absences following contact with the parents.

### Penalty Notices

Penalty notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Behaviour Service based on requests from schools and the police. The following circumstances are considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy, including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences

- Excessive holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions in any term before the issuing of a Penalty Notice can be considered. Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Behaviour Service that the request meets the conditions of the Code of Conduct. A warning letter will then be sent to parents explaining that unless their child attends full time for the next 15 days a Penalty Notice will be issued. Where a Penalty Notice is issued, each parent is required to pay a fine.

### **Informed by vision, linked to raising standards and educational outcomes**

Due to the academic goals that pupils will achieve daily, weekly, monthly, termly, and yearly which should fuel performance motivation, coupled with our strategy and strong emphasis on the promotion of good behaviour and character development, reinforced through the giving of rewards, privileges, merits, promotion strategies, corrective measures including demerits and the rewards that they will receive for punctuality and attendance – children will desire to attend school and be on time.

They will also be built up by committed, professional and caring members of staff who understand their cultural backgrounds and needs, and seek to be inclusive. The environment will be positive, welcoming and nurturing as we use a hand-in-glove with parents approach– children will know how precious they are to us. Small class sizes and ratios of ten children to one adult and a small school community (that is family orientated) will cause all children to be personally known so they feel a sense of belonging, being an integral part of a bigger unit. This security and self-esteem inculcated in all children should create a positive can-do attitude to learning and the whole school. Higher attendance rates, equates to pupils having more time to learn, develop and achieve at their own pace and being punctual is an ideal character trait.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Jasper City School has the responsibility for ensuring that all attendance data is accurately recorded in the register(s). Regular meetings are held with staff to discuss all attendance concerns, and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Policy Adopted by Governors & Directors: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Last Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Due for Review on: \_\_\_\_\_