



# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**2022 - 23**

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## 1. Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

St John Plessington Catholic College (SJP) 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.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available on our school website to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from Wirral Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school are committed to working closely with parents, other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by **'regular'** attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Regular attendance has been defined by the Supreme Court (6th April 2017) to mean "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

**\*Definition of parent: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** - A parent in relation to any child or young person, includes any person:-

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for him/her; or
- who has care of him/her;
- This also includes all parents who are absent. Parental partners can be included

(whether or not they are married or the natural parent of the child as they have 'care' of the child. If a pupil lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer, they can also be included as they are the main care provider.

- It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Wirral Code of Conduct for Education Penalty Notices set out the procedures for the issuing of an EPN. Full information can be found at: **[www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)**

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

For most pupils, the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Please see the 'working together to improve attendance' document for further information on 'School attendance; Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities '. This can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

### **3. Principles of the St John Plessington Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

The Governing Body of St John Plessington places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. They undertake this role by

- Monitoring whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.
- Nominating a named Governor for attendance.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;

- ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
- ensure pupils are punctual to their lessons.

Regular attendance and good punctuality at school is expected. The reasons for this are obvious: pupils learn best and receive most from school when they are actually there. This issue is highlighted in the Home/School Agreement, which all parents are asked to sign at the beginning of each year and also within other regular communications between home and school. The importance of attendance is explained during meetings between form tutors/learning coaches and pupils who attend SJP.

Any pupil whose absence falls below 96% should be noted by the form tutor/Head of Learning and the pupil will be placed on the 'Attendance Stage process' which is a graduated intervention system. This is to encourage improved attendance and put support systems in place with Education Welfare Service, Attendance Officer and School Nurse, to address persistent absence issues. Other outside agencies may also be involved in cases which show persistently poor attendance and pupils may be discussed.

In addition, and to ensure that we have explored all avenues of possible support, school may also seek advice from the Vulnerable Children's meeting, a multi-disciplinary panel who meet regularly to discuss such cases. The panel includes health, social care and education colleagues so that we can look at any additional support that may benefit the family and enable your child to attend school on a more regular basis.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Having poor attendance can have an impact on pupil progress and result in underachievement.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations from the Department for Education (which came into effect from September 2013) remove references to family holidays and extended leave. "Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances".

Please note 'exceptional circumstances' do NOT include a situation where parents choose to take pupils out of school to fit in with their work-related holiday dates. Please refer to the DfE "Amendments to school attendance regulations" for further details. If parents believe that their circumstances meet the 'exceptional' criteria, they must put a request in writing to the Head Teacher **at least one month** in advance of the date. Parents who take pupils on an unauthorised holiday in term time will result in an Education Penalty Notice.

#### 4. Daily Registers

Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is legally required to register pupils twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 08:40 and 08:55 and in the afternoon between 12pm and 1:15pm (split Academic Review). It is essential that all pupils are registered on both occasions.

Year Group	PM Registration Time
7	12pm
8	12.40pm
9	12pm
10	12pm
11	12.40pm
12	12.40pm
13	12.00pm

Pupils should be on the school yard no later than 08:35am, when the school gate will close. Pupils who attend after this time will be expected to enter school through the main school entrance at reception. School starts at 08:40 when all pupils should be in their morning form time, in preparation for the register being taken. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a pupil checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. fire drill. Registers will close at 09:25am each morning.

Pupils who enter the school through the canteen entrance following the closure of the main school gate, will be met by year group learning coaches to register and sign in at reception.

Pupils who arrive late to school will receive a late mark which will result in them receiving a sanction. Parents will be alerted to this through the school text system. Under rules set out by the Government 'Schools don't have to give

parents notice of after-school detentions or tell them why a detention has been given' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions>

Staff should take a register every lesson and only use the / \ or L code when taking class registers. Only key pastoral staff, the Attendance Officer/secretary should enter any other codes on registers.

Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

### **Clubs at lunchtime**

If clubs are to take place during AR time, it is the responsibility of the leader of the club to ensure they mark the pupils with them as present. The form tutor should **NOT** mark the pupil in AR Time unless they are in front of them for the **entire period of AR Time.**

Club leaders are asked to fill out the standard form lists and send to the office; it is not appropriate to send a written list of names. The lists can be found on the common drive. They should be with the attendance secretary **before the end of that period of AR Time.**

**Registers must be taken every lesson and staff should inform SLT through the call out system if a pupil who had been marked in previously that day has not shown up to their lesson.**

### **Trips**

Pupils going on trips should have their register taken by the trip leader. They should NOT be sent to get their mark from the classroom teacher. Trip leaders must also ensure that all pupils' names are given to the attendance secretary on standard form lists before they leave.

### **Rehearsals/Music lessons**

Rehearsals should always be marked in the rehearsal space/hall/drama studio – pupils should not be sent to class teachers to get their mark. The reason for this is simple – the pupil may get their mark and then truant. Safeguarding should always be our priority.

If a pupil is timetabled for a music lesson part way through your lesson, you should mark them in your lesson and allow them to go to it. It is the responsibility of the music department to check with HOL/Classroom teachers if the pupil does not attend at the allocated time and yet appears to be in school. Pupils should always have a pass or something similar in their planners.



## Absence / Lateness

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an **offence** if the child does not attend school regularly. ***If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone or email.***

If no message is received, we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. The school requires, where possible, **two** emergency contact numbers. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. Please inform us of any changes in writing through the pupil planner or letter/email to your child's Head of Learning. This information can also be updated using the data checking via Parentmail. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a note confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school. Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school has the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the pupil is unwell. This may include: a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Head Teacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not. If an appointment is authorised the pupil should be in school before the appointment and return following the appointment.

The College has invested in the 'Text Parents' system. Each morning parents/carers of any pupils absent will receive an automated phone call/text message requesting them to provide a reason for the absence. Text messages/emails may also be sent from the attendance secretary. There is a 'staged approach' with regards to phone calls from the Attendance Officer and HOL teams.

If parents are unable to return a call for whatever reason, a written explanation for the absence is necessary upon a pupil's return to College. There is a facility for

parents to be able to leave a message stating their son/daughter's reason for absence. Parents are informed of this information through reminders on the College website.

If any absence, whether covered by a note or not, is considered as an unauthorised absence by the Attendance Officer and HOL, it can result in an Education Penalty Notice. Parents will also be informed by a HOL or Attendance Officer of our concern.

If a pupil is absent for more than two days and there has been no communication from the family regarding the child's absence after an Attendance Officer home visit, then we may consider reporting our concerns for the safety of the child to Social Care. This should be managed by going through the appropriate safeguarding channels.

Where a pupil has truanted school or a lesson, then a sanction will be issued to ensure the time missed is caught up.

Pupils arriving after 09.00am receive a late mark. A note should be brought in to explain the circumstances for arrival after these times. Persistent lateness to College can result in an EPN for lateness.

The attendance secretary checks these timings daily and alerts the DHT and AHTs (pastoral) of any failure to close/take register/save register in the allocated time. Failure to complete a register will result in an SLT callout and possible further disciplinary action. Fire registers will be completed by the attendance secretary when registers close at 09:50am.

## **5. Absence from College**

On return from absence, the pupil meets with their form tutor and an 'Attend Today Achieve Tomorrow' meeting is held. During this meeting the pupil is asked to provide a reason for their absence and, if necessary, how they can be supported by their form tutor in having excellent attendance. On completion of the meeting, it is policy that the form tutor completes a google form, titled Attend Today Achieve Tomorrow. This is a summary of the discussion that has taken place and enables HOLS/ LC and AHTS to track returning absence. Attend Today Achieve Tomorrow meetings safeguard pupils and support them with their reintegration back into school after absence. They enable form tutors to explore any potential barriers to excellent attendance, so that swift intervention can be implemented.

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. This is an offence by any parent with parental responsibility, regardless of whether the student lives with this parent. Where pupil attendance drops below 96% a staged approach to attendance will be implemented in an

attempt to improve the pupil's attendance and avoid parents facing an EPN or prosecution.

When a pupil's attendance falls below 96%, and depending on the number of absences, a parent will receive a stage 1 email (see appendix 1). This letter identifies that their child's attendance is below the national expectation and is therefore a cause for concern and if there is no improvement they will be invited into school for a meeting to discuss the matter. The pupil's form tutor will host a stage 1 meeting (Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow).

When a pupil's attendance falls below 94% and depending on the number of absences a parent will receive a stage 2 email (see appendix 2). This email invites parents to a meeting with one of the following: Head of Learning / Learning Coach. During this meeting an action plan (see appendix 3) in order to improve the child's attendance will be completed, shared with the parents and recorded on CPOMS. The action plan will be closely monitored by HOL and FT over the next week.

Where parents fail to attend their stage 2 meeting on two separate occasions, or there is no improvement and the child's attendance drops below 90% without a valid reason, college will conduct a Stage 3 meeting (action short of EPN). This will be hosted by AHT/ Attendance Officer for the year group. Failure to improve after a stage 3 meeting may result in the school applying for an Education Penalty Notice (EPN)

The College will request penalty notices to address unauthorised absence. A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions, lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term or two concurrent half terms will be required to trigger the process. Please note ten (10) school sessions equates to five (5) school days (each school day consisting of morning and afternoon sessions).

The Local Authority may:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued.
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a penalty notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Further information on the Wirral protocol for EPN and forms for an EPN application can be found at:<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/schools%20and%20learning/education%20>

## 6. Absence Codes

The codes for use from September 2022 are:

### **Present at School:**

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration.

**Code L:** Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session.

**Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity:** An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

**Code B:** Off-site educational activity This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

**Code D:** Dual Registered - at another educational establishment This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that

the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

**Code J:** At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

**Code P:** Participating in a supervised sporting activity This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

**Code V:** Educational visit or trip This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

**Code W:** Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

### **Authorised Absence from School**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

**Code C:** Leave of absence authorised by the school Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and

circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. This is not to be used for authorised holidays.

**Code E:** Suspended but no alternative provision made If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each suspended pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

**Code H:** Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The **application must be made in advance** and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

**Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointments) Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. **Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily.** Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

**Code M:** Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code R:** Religious observance Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code S:** Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and **only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations.** Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

**Code T:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for **occupational purposes** and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

**Code G:** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations **do not allow schools to give retrospective approval**. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N:** Reason for absence not yet provided Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O:** Absent from school without authorisation If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

## Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

**Code X:** Not required to be in school This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

**Code Y:** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

**Code Z:** Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

**Code #:** Planned whole or partial school closure This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

## 7. School attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, serious crime and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2019) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016). Absence concerns of this nature should also be passed to the College DSL.



## Notifying the Local Authority

The College notify the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The College must also notify the Local Authority of any pupil/pupil who is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our College will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'.

Where a child leaves our school without a destination or another school is not identified we will follow Wirral Council Children Missing Education Procedures by completing a CME01 and returning to the LA.

The school will liaise with Karen Barry, Children Missing Education Officer Tel: 0151 666 4966 / 0151 666 3433 / Email: [karenbarry@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:karenbarry@wirral.gov.uk)

## 8. Reluctance to attend school

Sometimes a pupil may seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to your child's Head of Learning.

## 9. Leave of absence in term time

The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **'exceptional circumstances'**.

The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **From this perspective leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Head Teacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines the school will notify the Local Authority if a parent/s takes leave of absence **without** the Head Teacher's permission. In these cases, the **G code** will be used on the register to show this absence is **unauthorised**.

Under these circumstances, the school will apply to the **Local Authority** for an **Education Penalty Notice (EPN) Fine (£60-£120)** to be issued by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Charge Notice will need to be paid in full separately by

both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Charge Notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444, the Education Act 1996.

Pupils attending SJP will not be allowed absence for holidays. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised, (G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised absence.

Parents may choose to complete an ‘Application for Leave of Absence of Child from School in Exceptional Circumstances’ stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is passed to the Headteacher for approval. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised.

**If an ‘Application for Leave of Absence of Child from School in Exceptional Circumstances’ is rejected then the absence, should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time, will be dealt with under the Wirral ‘Code of Conduct Education Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence and Suspensions’.**

**It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.**

The College reserves the right to either contact the parents / carers directly or make an immediate referral to Social Care or the police if the school feels a pupil is potentially at risk while being taken out of school during term time.

## **10. Persistent Absence**

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. **Pupils with attendance below 90% fall into the ‘Persistent Absentee’ category.**

According to the DFE guidance ‘If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority’. In addition, ‘Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In order to avoid a pupil falling into this category a staged approach (as identified on page 17 of this document) will be used where possible to ensure that attendance below 96% improves. This includes emails to parents, staged meetings and action plans to ensure that attendance improves. These meetings

will also help to identify any concerns which may be causing the pupils absence and allow staff and parents to identify strategies to improve this.

When a pupil's attendance falls below 90% at any stage of the year a staged meeting will be held with College pastoral / Attendance staff. In addition, pupils will be monitored by the Form Tutor, Head of Learning, Learning Coach and SLT who will track their attendance on a weekly basis. Staff will contact parents to discuss the attendance concerns and formalise an **Action Plan (see appendix 5)** to secure an improvement in attendance.

This will contain improvement targets with set timescales and an overview of the support provided by the school to support the child and her family. Parental failure to comply with the contract may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to issue an EPN or prosecute parents.

Where an attendance meeting is called, the reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered

- A supportive action plan will be agreed.
- An attendance target date for improvement will be set.
- The pupil's attendance will then be closely monitored for a period of no more than 2 school weeks.

If the parent fails to attend this meeting without reasonable justification this could result in an EPN being issued to parents/carers or court proceedings under the 'Single Justice' process. Under section 444, an EPN will be **issued for £60 to both parents**. Each parent will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. Failure to pay the Penalty Charge Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500 or three months in prison.

### **What happens next?**

Whilst the intention of the School Attendance meeting is that attendance will improve, if the attendance deteriorates by the target review date the Local Authority may recommend legal action is taken. This could include prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, Education Supervision Orders or Parenting Orders.

**Issuing Penalty Charge Notices:** Each parent receives a penalty charge notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. Failure to pay the penalty notices may result in prosecution.

**Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444 - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

## 11. Punctuality

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

### Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends.
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons.
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day.
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equal days' worth teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

### Late Procedures

Pupils who arrive after the school gate closes will have to enter the school through the main entrance where they will be met by their learning coach to register/or sign at reception.. Pupils who arrive late to school will receive a late mark which will result in them receiving a detention from their head of learning. Persistent lateness will result in a further sanction from the year team.

Parents will be alerted to this through the school text system. Under rules set out by the Government 'Schools don't have to give parents notice of after-school detentions or tell them why a detention has been given' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions>

Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

## 12. Roles and Responsibilities

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

- Provide, where possible, **two** emergency contacts to the school.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence.
- Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible but, in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that she can complete most of her timetable before leaving.
- A child should attend school before and after their appointment.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school ensuring they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are exceptional circumstances please contact the Headteacher and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- Monitor your child's Internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
- Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact school before the concerns escalate.

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT SCHOOL DOES:

- Registers are taken every lesson each day. This includes roll call registers at the start and middle of the day.
- Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted the school of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Maintains records and monitors attendance of pupils on a regular basis.
- Authorises absences in accordance with the Government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.
- Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Undertake an Early Help Assessment where it is deemed appropriate.
- Monitor pupils who are supported by the In Year Fair Access Panel and those who attend alternative provision.

- Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the pupil / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
- Provides re – integration support for pupils returning from absence.
- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Inform parents of individual pupils' attendance record each term at Parents' Evening.
- Works with relevant external agencies if a pupils' attendance becomes a concern, ie – Social Care, Early Help Services, Police, YOT, SEND.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.
- Works in partnership with the Local Authority to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism sometimes utilising legal interventions.
- Hold stage meetings to support and improve attendance.
- Attendance Leagues- Rewards for excellent attendance and positive competition across year groups.

### **13. Communication with parents**

The college uses a text-based system to inform parents of absence where there has been no reason provided. Parents should contact the school 0151 645 5049 and select option 1. Please ensure you leave your child's name, year DOB and reason for the absence. Further phone communication through phone calls, text and parental meetings will also be used to address attendance concerns.

### **14. Rewards and incentives**

Attendance Leagues; How do they work?

Each year group has their own league and points are scored each week depending on overall attendance of the form – 10 points for the form with highest attendance, working down to 1 point for the form with the lowest attendance. The winning form each week will access a reward the following week. The winning form for the HT will receive the main reward during week 1 of the following HT.

Examples of the rewards for the winning form each week in each year are :

'Skip the Queue Lunch Pass for a week'.

A small bag of sweets.

The reward for the HT winning form in Yr7,8,9 is Period 4 in the College Hall watching a film of their choice. (Own food can be consumed). In years 10 and 11 the reward is a pizza party in the school canteen.

Attendance leagues provide an opportunity for form tutors to work with their forms on having excellent attendance, coming together to achieve success and improving attendance. Positive attendance will be celebrated by both Form Tutor and Head of Learning on a regular basis. Pupils with good attendance will also be celebrated at termly achievement assemblies.

## **15. Attendance Additional Intervention Meeting (AIM)**

Attendance AIM meetings take place as scheduled every half term as per the College calendar. AIM meetings may be called as needed to address concerns identified in particular year groups. These meetings will be chaired by the AHT and attended by the Head of Learning, Learning Coach and Attendance Officer. In these meetings action plans will be agreed and cohorts and strategies identified to improve pupil attendance.

## **Appendix 1 - Arbor Attendance User Guide Link**

<https://support.arbor-education.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000298325--How-a-teacher-can-take-the-register>

## **Appendix 2 - Stage 1 Attendance Email**

Dear **{Recipients(s) Salutation}**

**{Student(s) First Name} {Student(s) Last Name}**

Our records show that **{Student(s) First Name}**'s attendance is **{Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year}**. This is below the national expected minimum of 96% and is therefore a cause for concern.

Good attendance is key to ensuring that pupils progress well at school. In addition, your child's attendance record has to be conveyed in any future reference provided by the school.

We are hopeful that your child's attendance will improve. However, if this is not the case, you will be invited to come into school to discuss the matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Yours sincerely

**{Student(s) Head of Year}**

Head of Learning - **{Student(s) Year Group}**

### **Appendix 3 - Stage 2 Attendance Email - Invitation to Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan Telephone Meeting**

Dear **{Recipients(s) Salutation}**

**{Student(s) First Name} {Student(s) Last Name}**

Invitation - Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan Telephone Meeting

Our records show that {Student(s) First Name}'s attendance is **{Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year}**. This is below the national expected minimum of 96%. Good attendance is key to ensuring that pupils progress well at school. In addition, your child's attendance record has to be conveyed in any future reference provided by the school.



As **{Student(s) First Name}**'s attendance is a cause for concern, I will be contacting you via phone at the date and time stated below when we will discuss the matter and form an Action Plan.

**Date & Time {Report Field: Stage 2 Telephone Meeting Date & Time}**

**Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Education Social Welfare Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may also apply for an Education Supervision Order.**

**I look forward to speaking with you at this meeting. If this is inconvenient, please contact me as soon as possible to rearrange a more suitable time.**

Yours sincerely

**{Student(s) Head of Year}**

Head of Learning - **{Student(s) Year Group}**

#### **Appendix 4 - Stage 2 Attendance Email - Invitation to Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan Meeting at SJP**

Dear **{Recipients(s) Salutation}**

**{Student(s) First Name} {Student(s) Last Name}**

#### **Invitation to Stage 2 Attendance Action Plan Meeting at SJP**

Records show that **{Student(s) First Name}**'s attendance is **{Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year}**. This is well below the minimum national expectation of 96%. Good attendance is key to ensuring that pupils progress well at school. In addition, your child's attendance record has to be conveyed in any future reference provided by the school.

As **{Student(s) First Name}** 's attendance is a cause for concern, I would like to invite you to come into school at the date and time stated **below** when we will discuss the matter and form an Action Plan.

**Date & Time {Report Field: Stage 2/3 SJP Meeting Date & Time:}.**

**Location - St John Plessington Catholic College**

**Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Education Social Welfare Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may also apply for an Education Supervision Order.**

**I look forward to seeing you at this meeting. If this is inconvenient, please contact me as soon as possible to rearrange a more suitable time.**

Yours sincerely

**{Student(s) Head of Year}**

Head of Learning - **{Student(s) Year Group}**

## **Appendix 5 - Invitation - Stage 3 Attendance Action Plan Meeting at SJP**

Dear **{Recipients(s) Salutation}**

**{Student(s) First Name} {Student(s) Last Name}**

### **Invitation - Stage 3 Attendance Action Plan Meeting at SJP**

As you have failed our Stage 2 Attendance meeting, I am writing to formally invite you to a Stage 3 Attendance Action Plan meeting / Action short of issuing a fixed penalty notice.

You are invited to attend a meeting to be held at the College on the date and time stated below. If this date and time is not convenient, please contact me to rearrange the meeting.

**Date & Time {Report Field: Stage 2/3 SJP Meeting Date & Time:}.**

**Location - St John Plessington Catholic College**

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a way forward in improving your child's attendance.

Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with School Attendance Panels may be referred to the Education Social Welfare Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents who do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice may be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, Section 444 or the Local Authority may also apply for an Education Supervision Order.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about this letter.

Yours sincerely

Miss J Dyer

Attendance Officer

**Appendix 6 - Stage 2 Action Plan**

*To be completed during the stage 2 attendance meeting.*

<b>Name of pupil</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Attendance %</b>	
<b>In attendance at meeting</b>	
<b>(a) The school has agreed to:</b>	

<b>(b) The parent has agreed to:</b>
<b>(c) The pupil has agreed to:</b>
<b>Are there any social/medical/academic concerns you wish to raise re child's education that is affecting their attendance?</b>
<b>What are the actions the school has already implemented to support your child's attendance</b>
<b><i>Failure to meet the target setting this action plan will result in your child becoming a Stage 3 attendance concern and may be referred to the Education Social Welfare Service who may issue a fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days £120 within 28 days.</i></b>
<b>Target:</b> Full attendance better the dates of _____ and _____
<b>Review Date:</b> _____ <i>(the year team to contact parents/carers via phone call/letter to review action plan targets).</i>
<b>Agreed by: Pupil:</b> _____
<b>Parent:</b> _____
<b>School:</b> <i>(Please sign above as appropriate)</i>

## Appendix 7 - Stage 3 Action Plan

*Please note that parents who refuse to cooperate with the School Attendance Policy may be referred to the Education Social Welfare Service who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days.*

<b>Name of pupil</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Attendance %</b>	

<b>In attendance at meeting</b>	
<b>(c) The school has agreed to:</b>	
<b>(d) The parent has agreed to:</b>	
<b>(c) The pupil has agreed to:</b>	
<b>Are there any social/medical/academic concerns you wish to raise re child's education that is affecting their attendance?</b>	
<b>What are the actions the school has already implemented to support your child's attendance</b>	
<b>Target:</b> Full attendance better the dates of _____ and _____	
<b>Review Date:</b> _____ <i>(the year team to contact parents/carers via phone call/letter to review action plan targets).</i>	
<b>Agreed by: Pupil:</b>	<b>Parent:</b>
<b>School:</b> <i>(Please sign above as appropriate)</i>	

## Appendix 8 - Sample flyer to parents

### Attendance

Regular attendance is an important part of school life.

Good attendance shows potential employers that you are reliable.

Do we ever really consider the impact of having a day off school? The chart below shows the number of days and lessons 'lost learning' for pupils with different



percentage attendances. The chart is based on a school with a 190 day year and shows a five period day.

You can help by:

- making sure that your attendance and punctuality are as good as possible
- not missing school for minor things, think about whether you would expect to miss a day at work for the illness
- making sure appointments for dentist etc are made outside school hours

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Number of days lost learning</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Number of lessons lost learning (for a five day period day)</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>142.5</b>	<b>190</b>

Is 95% attendance good? This means that you have still missed nearly 10 school days in one year. Over five years that would be nearly 50 days, this is almost a school term.

## Appendix 9 - Staged Approach

We operate a 'staged approach' to tackling absence concerns. Persistent Absence (PA) is defined for any child with an absence of 10% or greater. School submit their absence figures to the DfE at various points throughout the year (in the CENSUS). This is then reported nationally in our Analyse.

The poster outlining the full process can be viewed [here](#)

**Attend Today,  
Achieve**

We operate a 'staged approach' to tackling absence concerns. Persistent Absence (PA) is defined for any child with an absence of 10% or greater. School submit their absence figures to the DfE at various points throughout the year (in the CENSUS). This is then reported nationally in our Analyse.