

THE KING JOHN SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Reviewed: March 2017

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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to encourage students to attend school every day and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between attainment and excellent school attendance.

A student's progress is severely hampered if they do not regularly attend school. To illustrate:

- 90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.
- 90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is half a school year missed.
- 80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

King John School: Attendance Definitions	
98-100%	Expected
96-97%	Satisfactory
95 % and below	A cause for concern
Below 90%	A serious cause for concern.

It is clearly understood that there are exceptional circumstances when levels of attendance may fall below 98% or even 95% for reasons beyond the student and parents' control. That said, these are very rare exceptions rather than the rule.

2. Key Personnel

Headteacher:	The Head teacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'
Leadership Team (LT) Link:	The LT link for attendance is Mr M Beston
Education Welfare Officer:	Mrs. J Flaxman
Attendance ambassador:	New post

3. Duties

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

4. Expectations

The school will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

The Parents or Guardians will:

- Ensure good attendance (96% and above)
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reason(s).
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time.
- Encourage routine at home for example, bed times, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for doctors, dentists etc outside of school hours.

Punctuality

The school day for students begins at 8.35am — by this time all students should be on the school's premises. All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.35am) and to all lessons. Any student who is late to school must attend a breaktime detention with a member of LT on the day of the lateness. Failure to attend will lead to an after-school detention on Friday night. Parents will receive notification where students have three or more late sessions in a half term.

Students arriving after 8.35 am will be marked as late using an 'L' code.

5. **Responsibilities**

Attendance Ambassador

- To identify persistent absence and punctuality issues producing regular reports.
- To input data for the late gate system.
- To monitor staff registers and notify staff where registers are missing.
- Have responsibility for conducting the six weekly register reviews informing EWO and Heads of Year of attendance issues.
- Are responsible for notifying parents of unauthorised absences on those occasions when a student has been absent for three days when no reason has been received from the parents;
- Liaising with SLT link regarding any issues with attendance and punctuality.
- Liaising with EWO where student attendance falls below 90%.

Form tutors

- Form Tutors have the responsibility of registering students' attendance at the beginning of the morning session completing registers by 8.50.
- Form Tutors will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations in a timely manner.
- Form Tutors have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day.
- Absence notes from parents will be checked by Form Tutors for their authenticity reasons for absence will then be added on SIMS. Notes will be passed to the student support officer for filing.
- Form tutors are responsible for notifying their SSO if a student is absent for 3 days or more where no reason is given.

Teachers

- Teachers must ensure they take a register at the beginning of each lesson of the day, within 15 minutes of the start of the lesson, especially during period 1 and also period 5 to meet the requirement of recording the attendance of every student at least twice a day.

Student Support Officers

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutors/attendance ambassador in checking that registers are completed accurately;
- Complete first day calling;
- Will ensure that the registers are available for scrutiny and for emergencies e.g. for fire drills;
- Will ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place;

Head(s) of Year/Assistant Heads of Year

- Will liaise closely with form tutors and attendance ambassador to encourage attendance and monitor closely those at risk of dropping below 96%;
- Implement strategies to improve attendance of students whose attendance is between 90-95%;
- Liaise with the EWO where students' attendance falls below 90%;
- Maintaining attendance and punctuality in year groups to meet school targets. Meeting with students and parents as necessary.
- Have a year group overview re: attendance to provide reports to Leadership in relation to impact on student progress;

EWO

- Working with students and parents where attendance falls below 90% to implement strategies to improve attendance and if necessary
- Liaising with attendance ambassador to support attendance of students who sit between 90-95% to prevent any further drop.
- Implementing the imposing of Penalty Notices procedure in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

6. Attendance Procedures

Parents are asked to telephone school before the end of the form period 9.00 to notify us of a child's absence. Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parents explaining the reason for the absence. Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying their form tutor/student support and must sign out of the school on departure.

Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at Student support and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.

Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the school's Student Support Officers (SSO) will endeavour to contact them.

7. Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent;
- School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within two weeks

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the courts.

The Governing Body has agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

- Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice (PN) being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality.
- Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the court officer to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

In circumstances where a PN has been served with no impact on attendance patterns show chronic poor attendance the school may request a prosecution through Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance.

8. Leave of Absence

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out in school time.

Parents are asked to remember that any savings they think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

Applications should be requested before any expenses are committed. Costs already incurred are not considered when a leave for absence request is reviewed.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This can be collected from reception or downloaded from the school's website. Completed forms should be returned to student support at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible).

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by the school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents/guardians, to be exceptional. Students will be expected to catch up with all work that has been missed.

A request for a leave of absence involving a student missing 4 or more days of school will **not** be authorised without a formal discussion between a parent/guardian and a member of the school's Leadership Team.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as the timing of the request:

- When a student is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave. The student has a serious work deficit other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year a leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references. Unauthorised absence of ten or more school sessions in a half term can lead to the authority issuing a penalty notice. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent per child.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed return date. Re- admission cannot be guaranteed.

The specific circumstances which outline when a student can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

9. Categorising Absence

The School will use SIMS.net for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Code	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	Counts toward 90% attendance
/	Present (AM)	Present	YES
\	Present (PM)	Present	YES
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity (absent for statistical purposes)	YES
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence	NO
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Educational Activity	YES
E	Excluded (no alternative	Authorised absence	NO
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	NO
H	Family holiday (agreed) Note above point about 2013 DfE guidance.	Authorised absence	NO
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	NO
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	YES, if approved in advance.
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	YES
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	NO
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	NO
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	NO
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	YES, if approve in
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	NO
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	NO
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	NO
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised	NO
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	YES
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	YES
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances	N/A

Note: authorised absence is still counted as absence for the purposes of calculating student attendance figures.

10. **Monitoring attendance**

Student support will make “first day response to absence calls”. Families of these students will be contacted as early as possible on the first day of absence. The attendance ambassador will provide analyses of attendance on request.

The EWO will meet with the attendance ambassador weekly to discuss attendance issues and to highlight individual students. Students with attendance below 90% will be contacted by the EWO/Head of Year to come in for a school based meeting.

The Leadership Team link and the Headteacher will have a formal termly meeting to review individual cases. At this meeting, future strategies will be developed.

Students will be rewarded for excellent attendance via the school’s rewards system.

Governors will receive reports on attendance/punctuality. The Headteacher will inform all Governors of the school’s response to its attendance target on a termly basis at the Full Governors meeting.

11. **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the student.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the student.
- Death of a student.

12. **Support Systems**

School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

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

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Student Voice activities
- Friendship groups
- Personal, Social, & Health Education (PSHE)
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages
- Support offered to families will be child centered and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.
- Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider the use of legal sanctions.