



With love we flourish

"I have come that you may have life in all its fullness." John 10:10

Our Christian vision is the foundation of our school and allows us to:

- Respect and love everyone for who they are
- Celebrate and serve our diverse community
- Nurture a passion for education so everyone can realise their potential

SS Philip and James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Attendance Policy 2023-24

Signed:

(Head teacher)

Signed:

(Chair of Governors)

Approved by Governing Body:	18.10.2023
Date:	September 2023
Next Review Date:	September 2024

Phil & Jim is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council & the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education.

Our governing board scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social wellbeing.

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

› [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher/[role] (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Siobhan Mallon and can be contacted via 01865 311064 or by sending an email to senco@ss-philip-and-james.oxon.sch.uk

3.4 The County Attendance Team:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, Or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A). The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs form.

Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance. Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office each day during the registration period.

3.6 School administration staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the members of the Senior Leadership team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The registration period for the morning session opens 8.50am and close at 9.00am.

The school gate is opened at 8.40am.

The register is taken at 8.50am so pupils must be in their classroom by this time otherwise they will be marked as late in the register.

If your child arrives at school after the register has been taken at 8.50am but before 9.00am (when the registration period closes), they will be marked in the register as late arrival before the registration period has closed.

If your child arrives after the registration period has closed at 9.00am, your child will be marked in the register as unauthorised, late after registration has closed.

Pupils must be in their classroom by 8.50am on each school day.

Afternoon registration is open for 10 minutes after the end of lunchtime.

4.2 Unplanned absence

First day of absence

1. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents and carers to give specific reasons for the absence.
2. If there has been no contact by the parent/carer, after the register has closed, the school will telephone the first named contact on the child's registration form. Other named contacts will be telephoned if the first named contact is unavailable. Failed attempts to speak to a parent/carer will be recorded. This will be done by 9.30 am.
3. The office staff will inform the Senior Leadership Team if no named contact can be reached. If appropriate, DSL may visit the home to conduct a welfare check.

From second day of absence

1. Parents/carers must telephone the school and provide specific reasons for the absence and information on the child's anticipated return.

2. If there has been no contact by parent/carer, the school will telephone the first named contact on the child's registration form, followed by other named contacts as above.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or if the length of absence exceeds 7 days including weekends, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Procedure for requesting term time absence

Parent or Carer to email the headteacher giving specific reasons for requesting term time absence. The headteacher may request a face-to-face meeting with parents to discuss the written request. Parents will be informed in writing if the request for term time absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child.

How we manage time keeping: The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (/) Registers are marked at 8.50am. If your child arrives after this point they will receive a late mark (L). At 9.00am the registers are closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. Whilst there is no mandatory time for pm registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or ~~whom~~ who do not return.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take other measures e.g. contact social care or police
- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by meeting with parents to identify barriers to attendance and actions to address them
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

We will report attendance to all parents/ carers via written school reports 3 times per year. We report percentage of attendance and the number of authorised and unauthorised sessions.

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes: Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily; truancy before or during the school day; absences which have never been properly explained; children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark; shopping, looking after other children; birthdays; day trips and holidays in term time; excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or ~~to~~ give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bedtimes

Helping with homework

Having clothing and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

Retaining open & honest communication with school

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress which can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs form with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as the leave would be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child. The benefit of the leave would outweigh the loss of teaching time. The leave would be for a one-off, never-to-be-repeated experience.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Any request should be submitted to the headteacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence by sending an email to headpa@philandjim.org.uk. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Last year 16 children ended the school year with 100% school attendance.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

We promote attendance by sharing expectations with parents and carers, celebrating improving attendance, working closely with families and children.

7. Attendance monitoring

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We analyse all absence carefully and draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The Inclusion Lead at Phil & Jim monitors pupil absence on a weekly and half termly basis. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill. If a pupil's absence goes above 5 consecutive days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider making a referral to Oxfordshire county attendance team. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school collect and store attendance data, which is used for the following purposes:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Closely monitor attendance of all pupils
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Inform parents/ carers via letter about their child's attendance
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to

		exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank

		holiday/INSET day
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