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DIOCESE OF  
**ST ALBANS**  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

# Trust Policy

## Attendance Policy

<b>Policy type</b>	<b>Trust wide</b>
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This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented with academy specific sections authorised by the CEO.

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## OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God’s Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, ‘flourish’ refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least “Good” within 3 years post-conversion. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration.

The Trust’s vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust’s wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

## OUR COMMUNITY

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust’s work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

Our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust’s schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines focusing

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on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) Attendance policy and must be implemented and adhered to in each of the academies within the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust. For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT.

## 1. AIMS

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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](#)

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- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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 Governance

The **Trust Board** is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most (delegated to the Education and Ethos committee)

The **Executive Leadership Team** is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

The **Cluster Education Cluster Leaders** will work with Headteacher to ensure the below...

- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

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- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Ensuring that the agreed steps to take regarding follow up action for absences, including holiday absence, is taken by all schools consistently.

**The Local Governing Board (LGB)** is responsible for:

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's local policies and ethos
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data shared through the Leadership Report and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB through the Leadership Report.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

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- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising assistant headteacher/admin assistant to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader Ian Leach also known as the as the 'senior attendance champion' is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Attending and supporting Attendance Reviews led by DSAMAT or by external partners.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ian Leach and can be contacted via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

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- 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 when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer Ian Leach can be contacted via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

### 3.5 Class Teachers / Form Tutors

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office. This needs to be completed by 09:05 and 13:05 daily.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School admin 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 senior Leadership team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:45 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

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Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting, assistant headteacher Ian Leach also known as the 'senior attendance champion' who can be contacted via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

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## 4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50 and ends at 15:30.

The gates open at 8:45 until 8:50. Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:50 and will be kept open until 09:20 The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:10.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

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The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45, or as soon as practically possible, by calling and/or emailing the school admin/office staff, who can be contacted via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 school days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 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 notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

You can request a leave of absence form from the school office via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

However, we encourage parents 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 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.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school will monitor children's punctuality, if your child is persistently late over a 2-week period the school will contact parents to discuss if we can support the family to improve this. If punctuality does not improve over the next 2 weeks the parents will receive a formal letter which outlines the importance of punctuality and highlights the loss of learning time. The letter offers the parents an opportunity to meet and discuss support and the consequences if punctuality does not improve.

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Call the pupil's parent 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 will follow the LA agreed steps and/or may contact the police if they believe there may be a safeguarding concern.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels termly. During parent consultations, your child class teacher will provide you with a written report. Those parents that do not attend parent consultations face to face will have a copy sent home. Parents can monitor their child's attendance daily via the Arbor app

## 5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview

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- > Study leave
- > A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- > 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:

### **Exceptional circumstances**

This information seeks to help clarify the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' and outline some guiding principles to aid the head teacher's decision-making process while giving parents a consistent and fair approach to requests for any term-time absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

### **Guiding principles**

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. The head teacher will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event, for example:
  - a. holidays or other travel, including as a result of parental work commitments, are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances';
  - b. leave which is taken because of the availability of cheaper fares or other costs are not regarded as exceptional circumstances;
  - c. claims of illness as a reason for a delayed return, particularly after normal school holidays will not be considered unless accompanied by travel tickets dated before the school opens or other agreed dates. Medical documentation from abroad will not normally be accepted unless accompanied by travel documents indicating travel dates prior to school reopening.

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4. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave. Absence will only be authorised if the head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
5. Absences to attend parents' own wedding may be exceptional if the head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the head teacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
6. The needs of the families of service personnel will be taken into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
7. Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be made and may result in a leave being granted as an exceptional circumstance.
8. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis, including where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
9. When making absence-related decisions, the head teacher will consider:
  - a. a pupil's record of attendance for the current and previous academic years;
  - b. time of absence being taken in the school year. If the request is made to extend the beginning or end of a school holiday period, it is unlikely to be considered exceptional.
10. The head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.

The following factors may also help the head teacher to reach a decision:

- number of school days being missed;
- any exceptional term-time leave requested and/or taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose;
- whether alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent to limit the time away from school;

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- impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, for example, family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN;
- the potential impact that the absence will have on the child;
- whether the absence falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

How to tell us about exceptional circumstances:

- A parent should complete an leave of absence application form for term-time leave in good time. The parent with whom the pupil normally resides must make the application.
- Leave may only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given.
- Tickets and/or other travel arrangements should not be booked prior to discussion with and agreement of the school.
- Parents should not confuse telling the school with having permission.
- Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine.
- Extended absences may put your child's school place at risk.
- In the event of an emergency when you have to take leave urgently, taking children, then you should inform the school or have the school informed immediately. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively and evidence other than your word may be asked for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office via 01234 362721 and/or [office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk](mailto:office@stjamesvaschool.co.uk)

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

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- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

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- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

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- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our School, with certificates awarded to individual children during the academic year (September to July). We celebrate the best attendance in our Celebration Assemblies on Fridays, with classes who achieve the best attendance over a week receiving an 'Attendance Treat'.

## 7. SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE ABSENT OR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

At St James' CE Primary we want all our pupils to feel happy, safe and secure at school. We want to make sure our young people receive day to day or additional support to attend school and engage in their learning. Parents and carers are by far the most important influence on children's lives and learning and it is parents and carers who are responsible for making sure their child is educated.

Of course, some children face greater barriers to attendance, such as pupils with long term medical conditions, extended periods of absence or special educational needs and disabilities.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, St James' will always take the time to have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place.

Support may include:

- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or help for pupils where mental health issues are affecting their attendance.
- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.
- For all our children we maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

The new guidance also introduces new attendance codes that track children who are on part-time timetables, or absent because transport hasn't been provided, to help better understand patterns and barriers to attendance .

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#### Useful links

- Parentkind  
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/>
- Action for Children  
<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/>
- School Anxiety and refusal  
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>
- MIND- Young People  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/information-for-parents/>

## 8. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

### St James' Attendance Monitoring Procedures

**Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.**

St James' has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

- A weekly report detailing weekly and annual attendance to date is reviewed by attendance lead: Overall data, Disadvantaged, Boys/Girls, LAC/PLAC, SEND, SEND (EHCP), Other groups
- Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
- Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported.
- If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the class teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The class teacher may also make a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
- The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the attendance officer and classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.

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- After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the attendance officer to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
- If targets are not met, parents will be sent a second letter, and the attendance office may make a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established. If there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

### **DSAMAT Attendance reviews**

The Diocese of St Albans MAT conduct annual Attendance Reviews (run by the Education Cluster Leaders) within each school to monitor and review Attendance and Absence figure, analysing pupil groups and different cohorts with each school's distinctly different context. The review will consider the following:

- Data Summary: Overall data, Disadvantaged, Boys/Girls, LAC/PLAC, SEND, SEND (EHCP), Other groups which may be specific to each school e.g. GRT, NRPF.
- How data presents at that point in time and how it has changed over time.
- Authorised / Unauthorised absences.
- Exceptional Circumstances Authorised absence. Rationale for use of exceptional criteria
- Persistent Absence – reasons for this and actions to reduce.
- Barriers to good attendance and actions taken to reduce / remove the barriers
- Case Studies of successes and what can be learned from these to inform other cases across the Trust
- Suspensions and Exclusions, where applicable.
- In year leavers, numbers of and reasons for leaving.
- Discussion about leadership and management of attendance, systems and processes in place to record, review and analyse attendance, CME procedures and off-rolling procedures.

Each DSAMAT Attendance review is summarised within a report which details strengths and areas for further development (which sits in the school's success tracker). This report is shared with the Headteacher / Senior leader / Attendance Officer, Cluster Lead and DSAMAT Executive team/ The Headteacher shares the report with the LGB as part of the Leadership report and the CEO shares a summary of Trust wide reports with the Trust Board Education and Ethos Committee

The Headteacher ensure that action is taken for all recommendations form the annual audit and the Cluster Education Leaders will receive this information and impact data

## **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

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The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the LGB. The Executive Leadership Team will share Trust wide attendance data with the Education and Ethos Committee regularly alongside the most up to date national figures.

## **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)

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- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

#### **8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

### **9. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

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

### **10. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

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This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



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## 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience

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<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		

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<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

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<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

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<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

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