



John T Rice Infant & Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.

- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school with a first-day absence telephone call and/or text.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the Government on attendance three times a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Regular attendance is defined as “**children must be at school every day that the school requires them to be**”.
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school’s attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child’s learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.45 a.m.
- To inform school of any absence and keep us up to date of any prolonged absence. If we are not informed of a reason for absence this will be considered as unauthorised.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school’s ‘**Leave Of Absence Form**’, giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and The Family Service to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day. Medical appointments don’t normally need a full day so children should only be absent for the length of the appointment. They should attend school before the appointment and return to school immediately after.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child’s attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child’s class teacher in the first instance.

PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE

99% - 100%	Excellent
96% - 98.9%	Good
95% - 95.9%	Satisfactory
93% - 94.9%	Requires Improvement (this equates to more than 1 day of absence every 4 weeks)
90% - 92.9%	At Risk of Persistent Absence
Below 90%	Persistent Absentee (this equates to more than 1 day off every 2 weeks)

90% attendance is equivalent to 19 days absence in a year. These pupils are missing 4 weeks of school a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.

Pupils with 80% attendance are missing a day for every week of school. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE THRESHOLDS

A child will become a Persistent Absentee if they miss the number of sessions detailed below:

Term	No of Absences
September – October 1 st Half Term	7 or more sessions 3½ days
September – December Autumn Term	14 or more sessions 7 days
September – February Half Year	20 or more sessions 10 days
September – Easter Autumn & Spring Term	25 or more sessions 12½
September – May 5 Half Terms	31 or more sessions 15½ days
September – July Full Academic Year	38 or more sessions 19 days

The Government have set the persistent absence threshold to 10% from September 2015. This means that any student with an attendance level of 90% or below will be deemed a Persistent Absentee and the Local Authority may choose to take action.

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The Office Manager will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Head Teacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: When a child's attendance falls below 90% the school will send an Initial Concern Letter home.

- Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers advising them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 6 weeks.
- Stage 3: If there is no improvement after the 6 week period the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the Governors. At this point the school may make a formal referral to The Family Service to deal with the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist, please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

“Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances”

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed '**Application for leave of absence during term time**'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are approximately 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.
- Any request for Leave of Absence of **more than 5 days** in any academic year could lead to the school issuing a Penalty Notice or prosecution. The penalty is set at £120 per child per parent/carer and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts.
- Medical proof will be required for any absences taken immediately before or after a Request for Leave of absence that leads to more than 5 days absence otherwise a Penalty Notice may be issued.

SICKNESS

- Please notify the school by 9:30a.m. on the first day of the absence. Failure to notify the school either by phone on the first day or letter upon a child's return to school will lead to the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised, particularly if the child then gives us a

contradicting reason for their absence. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable and may be unauthorised. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of staff in the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- Persistent absence due to illness may result in a referral to the School Nurse.

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 8.45 a.m. each day. Doors open at 8:40am to allow all children to be in class by 8:45am. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
The school gates will be shut by 8.55 a.m. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will need to complete a Late Slip.
- Lateness will be monitored and the Officer Manager will follow this up.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.15 a.m., the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M' if we have seen proof of the appointment in the form of either a letter, an appointment card or text message.

Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Head teacher and/or Governors.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by

- JTR Bear – Weekly attendance figures for each class are collated on Friday and JTR Bear goes into the class with the highest level of attendance for the next week as long as it is over 96%.
- Class attendance for the month is included in the newsletter with the winning class congratulated.
- 100% attendance – Half-termly and termly awards are given to individual children during a ‘Special Attendance’ assembly. The theme for our attendance awards changes each year.
- Certificates and special prizes – Annual awards are given to individual children in ‘Well Done’ assembly for achieving 100% attendance during the year.

GOVERNORS

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

This policy was agreed in July 2017 and will be reviewed again in September 2018.