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# JULIAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## Attendance Policy Statement

At the heart of everything we do at Julian's School is children's learning - but children cannot learn if they are absent. We therefore aim to ensure that our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils. We have therefore adopted the following policy and procedures in consultation with parents/carers, children, staff, governors and the Education Welfare Department.

### **Objectives**

- To improve whole school attendance and punctuality
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- To develop and maintain effective communication regarding attendance between home and school

### **The Education Act 1996**

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that parents/carers meet these responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is usually carried out by the LA Education Welfare Service which provides an important link between schools and families.

The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. Heads can, of course, notify the LA earlier if there are areas of concern.

### **Pupil Registration**

The school is required to maintain two registers:

- an admission register (known as the school roll)
- an attendance register (unless all pupils are boarders)

The admission register shall contain a list of all pupils at the school. The school ensures that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

### **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence?**

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

All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

## **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly. If a child does not attend regularly, parents/carers should work closely with the school and any assigned **Education Welfare Officer** to resolve the problem.

From 1 March 2001 parents/carers found guilty of school attendance offences could be subject to a penalty of up to £2500 and/or a period of imprisonment for up to three months, or alternatively the LA could recommend that a parenting order be enforced.

At Julian's School we encourage a good working relationship with parents/carers by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and by advising of the school's policy towards authorised absence in the home-school agreement.

A DfES leaflet School Attendance: Information for Parents/Carers (DfES Publications) is available for schools and LEAs to distribute to parents/carers if requested or when deemed appropriate. It is published in English and eleven community languages.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school from 8.55am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival. If a child arrives after the rest of the class has gone down to the classroom they should report to the school office to ensure that they are registered for the day.

Afternoon registration will take place at 1.15pm for EYFS, Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2 and will close at 1.25pm. Children who arrive late without an authorised reason after the register has closed are marked absent for that session. Where children are regularly late for school, the school will write to parents/carers informing them of the school's concerns and offering support and help to rectify the situation.

If lateness is consistent and parents/carers have not responded to support from the school, then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

## **First Day Absence**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence before 9am. In the case of identified children, the school will make first day absence telephone contact. Class teachers & the Pupil and Family Support Worker are initially responsible for ensuring that the office is made aware when identified children are absent. The admin staff will then call the family and check on reasons for absence. This information will then be recorded and actioned appropriately.

### **Fourth Day Absence**

If a child has been absent for more than 3 consecutive days, the school will contact the family to check and establish reason for absence (if the parent carer has not made further subsequent contact). If the absence is due to illness the parent/carer must provide a doctor's note to the school office. An appointment card or prescription can be used if your GP is unable to provide you with a free of charge note.

### **Ten Days' Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. (THIS IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT.) The school will include details in the referral of any action that they have taken to make contact with the parent/carer. Any child who is absent from school for more than 10 days for reasons other than illness can potentially have their place withdrawn and be deleted from the Admission Register.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. They are invited to a meeting with the Executive Head or Head of School to discuss the absences and ways to improve attendance. Other staff members (for example Mentors) may attend if appropriate, at the initial meeting. An external agency or the school nurse may be subsequently be involved. The expectation is that attendance will improve.

### **Frequent Medical Absences**

The school will discuss with the School Nurse those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons. Where necessary a referral will be made to evaluate the child's health and educational needs.

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Absence Notes**

The school requires written notes explaining reasons for absence for every period of absence recorded by a child. Where a note is not provided when a child returns to school, we will adopt the following procedures:-

- The school will contact the Parent/Carer to ask for the reason for the absence by telephone or by letter following the return to school
- If the school receives no response to this letter, we then send out a second request for reasons for absence and may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service

### **Medical Appointments**

Whenever possible all appointments should be made after school or during school holidays. However, if a child needs to attend a hospital or clinic appointment during school hours, the parent/carer must provide the school with an appointment letter or card for it to be authorised.

Parent/Carers should then collect and/or return their child to the school office to minimise disruption in the classroom and to safeguard the children.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

The school monitors the attendance of all pupils on a weekly basis. Where the school have identified that a child's attendance has fallen below the level of 90% in any six week period, the school writes to the parents/carers making them aware of our concerns and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school. The expected level of attendance for primary age children is 95%.

If there is no subsequent improvement in a child's attendance, a second attendance letter is sent home informing parents/carers of school and national expectations and asking them to try to ensure that their child's attendance improves and offering support and advice where necessary.

If a child's attendance continues to be of concern a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. The school will endeavour to work with and support all children and families wherever possible.

### **Holidays in term time**

The school is unable to authorise taking of holidays during term time and will only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. All requests must be made in advanced by filling in a Special Leave form which will need to be submitted to the school office. We advise that travel should not be booked before receiving authorisation. Requests must be approved in advance of any leave being taken. Special Leave requests are referred to the Local Authority. Any unauthorised absences and/or holidays may be liable to lead to penalties applied by Lambeth.

### **Attendance Awards**

The school operates a number of awards and incentives for good attendance. Each term we present certificates to children reaching 100% attendance and recognise the two classes within the school with the best overall attendance. We also write to parents/carers thanking them and acknowledging their support.

### **Attendance Targets:**

The school's overall attendance figure last year was 97%.

Our target remains at 95%.

## Appendix 1

### Types of absence and associated actions

This table shows types of absences which schools may treat as authorised

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Illness, medical and dental appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable.</li> <li>• If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session although the time will be noted in the register and/or office.</li> <li>• Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.</li> <li>• If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the school Health Service, or the pupil's GP. It may be decided to complete a CAF at this point.</li> <li>• A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.</li> </ul>
Days of religious observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong, including religious festivals.</li> <li>• Parents/carers should be encouraged to give advance notice.</li> </ul>
Interviews for a place at another school (including entrance examinations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff should normally ask for advance notice and proof of the appointment, e.g. a letter of invitation.</li> </ul>
Dual Registration involving Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The law allows for dual registration of pupils at both a PRU or special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education.</li> <li>• Where a pupil is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil authorised absent while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child.</li> <li>• Failure to attend either institution at the proper</li> </ul>

	time without good reason is unauthorised absence.
Special leave during term time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers should not take pupils on holidays in term time and may be liable to receive a penalty notice if they do so. Schools should not normally agree an absence of more than 10 school days.</li> <li>• If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday or takes special leave, absence is unauthorised and the parent/carer may be liable to receive a penalty notice.</li> <li>• If parents/carers keep a child away for longer than an agreed time granted for special leave, the extra time will be recorded as unauthorised.</li> <li>• Schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 4 weeks of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. The EWO must be informed.</li> </ul>
Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.</li> <li>• If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or an expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the pupil takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised.</li> <li>• Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.</li> </ul>
Traveller child when the family is travelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling.</li> <li>• While the Traveller is away, the base school holds the place open and records absence as authorised.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.</li> </ul>
Family bereavements, or child caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences.</li> <li>Similarly, schools may authorise limited duration absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made.</li> </ul>
Special occasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence.</li> <li>Schools should consider: the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent/carer gave advance notice; the pupil's overall attendance pattern.</li> </ul>
Public performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Local Authority must license a pupil to take part in a public performance.</li> <li>Agreed participation should be treated as authorised absence.</li> </ul>
Lateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival which could provide grounds for prosecution. Staff monitor lateness each day and notify parents/carers if there are three or more lates recorded in a three week period. Persistent lateness will result in a referral to the EWO.</li> <li>Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. Thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable, but schools can set shorter periods.</li> <li>In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.</li> </ul>

*Reviewed: May 2017*