THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER ACADEMIES TRUST
unlocking potential

Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

St James' Church of England Primary School

Inspiring and Growing for Fullness of Life

Our vision is to enable all to flourish.

Status and review cycle: Non-statutory and annual

Responsible group: CEO

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1.0 Statement of Intent

1.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education elsewhere.

1.2 Poor attendance, repeated absence, and children missing education may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, contextual safeguarding risks or other safeguarding concerns and will be considered within the school's safeguarding procedures.

1.3 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence, in advance, from the school.

1.4 XXXX school believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

1.5 We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

1.6 We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

1.7 We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils, and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents, and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils, groups of pupils or cohorts that require more support.

1.7 The school has appointed a senior member of the leadership team to be responsible for attendance. The Attendance Lead is Mrs Caryn Smith and can be contacted via admin @st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk.

1.8 Staff, and parents will be expected to contact the Attendance Lead for queries or concerns about attendance.

1.9 When reporting daily absence in line with the school's process for this, the member of staff in the school office to contact is Mrs Tracy Clarke and Mrs Ellie Calienda . They can be contacted via email address admin@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk or via the Arbour App.

2.0 Legal framework

2.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance' July 2026
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Attendance Lead role.
- Ensuring regular review of attendance data, weekly and half termly is completed.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring that school's data is shared with the Trust.

3.2 Staff members are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Accurate completion of the school's attendance registers.

3.3 The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision and strategy for improving attendance.
- Regular monitoring of attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups including: pupils with SEND, children in need, looked after children, pupils with a social worker, young carers.
- Report attendance trends to governors and the Trust.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement, including pupils at risk of persistent and severe absence.
- Communicating with pupils and parents about attendance.

- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance; coordinate support plans, facilitate multi-agency working.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Ensure that the attendance policy is on the school's website and is communicated clearly to parents.

3.4 Pupils are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

3.5 Parents are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- updating the school if their details change.
- ensuring that their children attend school daily when school is open.
- promoting good attendance with their children.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- notifying the school in line with missing education processes as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent because of sickness.

3.6 The Local Governing Board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the school's aspiration and commitment to securing high levels of attendance.
- Monitoring the provision of attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data for individual vulnerable cohorts and challenge leaders regarding persistent and severe absence trends. The LGB will receive this data via the Headteacher Report.
- Monitoring that the implementation of this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Responding to complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when monitoring safeguarding.
- Monitoring there is a Children Missing Education process in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Parent:

In keeping with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, in England, a "parent" is defined broadly to include:

- **All biological parents**, whether they are married or not.
- **Any person with parental responsibility** for a child or young person. This could include adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians, or other relatives.
- **Any person who has care of a child or young person**, even if they are not a biological parent and do not have parental responsibility. This typically includes individuals with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who look after the child This inclusive definition ensures that all individuals responsible for a child's welfare and education are recognised in school policies and legal contexts, helping to maintain high levels of school attendance.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe Absence (SA):

- A pupil missing 50% or more of their possible sessions.

Regular Attendance:

- Being in school, on time, every day.

5.0 Attendance expectations

5.1 The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils: regular attendance is being in school, on time every day.

5.2 Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day. Attendance registers will be taken at the same published time for all registered pupils in both the morning and afternoon session.

5.3 The school day starts at 8:40am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site between 8:25am and 8:40am.

Registers are open from 8:40am and closed at 9:00am. Infant pupils will have a morning break at 10:15am, which will last until 10:30am, and a lunch break at 11:45am, which will last until 12:45pm.

Junior pupils will have a morning break at 10:30am, which will last until 10:45am, and a lunch break at 12:30pm, which will last until 1:30pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

5.4 Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day; School uses Arbor for its electronic attendance register:

- The morning register will open at 8:25am and be marked by 8:40am. Pupils will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark (U).
- The morning register will close at 9:00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register for Infants will be open from 12:45pm and be marked by 12:50pm. Pupils will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in their classroom by this time The afternoon register will close at 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- The afternoon register for juniors will be open from 1:30pm and be marked by 1:40pm. Pupils will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in their classroom by this time The afternoon register will close at 1:45pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

5.5 Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6.0 Absence procedures

6.1 Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone/Arbor App or by email to admin@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

6.2 Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the **school by the close of the morning register at 9:00am** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

6.3 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
Ascertain the reason for the absence.

- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

6.4 Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10** school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

6.5 The school will not routinely request medical evidence. Medical evidence may be requested only where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, where absences are prolonged, frequent or recurring, or where evidence would assist in understanding a pupil's health needs and identifying appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.

6.6 In the case of PA or where a child is at risk of becoming PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Lead. The school will inform the DCEO and the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

6.7 If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the Attendance Lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

6.8 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

7.0 Attendance register

7.1 The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. Attendance coding will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the latest DfE guidance and census requirements. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
- C = exceptional circumstance
- C1 = Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Suspended or Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- J1 = attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S= Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- W = Attending work experience
- B = Attending any other approved educational activity such as Alternative Provision
- G = Holiday not granted by the school
- = Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller Absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
    - = Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

7.2 When the school has planned to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

7.3 All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

7.4 Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **six years**.

8.0 Authorising parental absence requests

8.1 There are rare occasions when exceptional leave will be requested. Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account considering the pupils attendance record. Absence will be authorised for whichever circumstances the headteacher believes to be acceptable and will usually be a one-off or unavoidable situation. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

8.2 Leave of absence:

- The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.
- Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant a leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday and will request that the Local Authority issue a fixed penalty notice, should the duration be 5 days or 10 sessions.
- Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

    Please note: this is not an exclusive or exhaustive list.

8.3 If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in a sanction, such as a penalty notice or Fixed Penalty Notice. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

8.4 Following an exclusion from school, penalty notices issued to parents of children seen in a public place within 5 days are still set at £60/£120 and are not subject to the rolling three-year period.

8.5 More information can be found here: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/hn1afkus/gcc-pn-code-ofconduct.pdf

8.6 The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

9.0 Illness and healthcare appointments

9.1 Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

10.0 Performances and activities, including paid work

10.1 The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which allows the child to perform. Applications for this type of work will need to be made via the usual absence request form available from the school office.

10.2 Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that they are suitable for the pupil.

10.3 Headteacher's permission must be requested for any such absence. Where there are concerns that the absence may cause education to suffer, school will liaise with the Local Authority

11.0 Religious observance

11.1 Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

11.2 The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

11.3 The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

12.0 Code T Parent travelling for occupational purposes

12.1 Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

13.0 SEND – and health-related absences

13.1 The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult. The school will proactively consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where disabilities, medical needs, anxiety-based school avoidance, or other SEND-related needs impact attendance.

13.2 In line with the schools SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

13.3 Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

13.4 If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities, and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

13.5 The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement. Remote education will only be used as a temporary measure where pupils cannot attend in person and where this forms part of a wider reintegration plan. Remote education will not be viewed as an alternative to full-time school attendance except where it is necessary and appropriate for the individual pupil.

13.6 To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.

- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

14.0 Leave during lunch times

14.1 Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

14.2 Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

14.3 Where permission has been granted, the headteacher will ensure a lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

14.4 Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

14.5 Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

14.6 The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

14.7 Permission will be updated on a **termly** basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

15.0 Attendance intervention

15.1 In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Lead responsible for attendance will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Having a **weekly** review with the Class Teacher.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.

- Using fixed penalty notices.
- Creating attendance clinics.

15.2 The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

15.4 The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

16.0 Working with parents to improve attendance

16.1 The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services, and health professionals.

16.2 The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

16.3 The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence, and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially, and developmentally. In this school this is done by

- Reporting children's attendance in the Spring and Summer parent report.
- Talking with parents at parents evening (x2 a year) if concerns about attendance.
- Communication with all parents through the SCOOP/Week at a Glance and emails.
- Phone calls to parents where attendance is a concern.
- Letter sent to parents whose child's attendance is a concern sharing the amount of learning lost at that point (maths and English sessions) and playtimes missed.

16.4 If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance Lead responsible for attendance will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

16.5 Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance Lead will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

17.0 Persistent absence (PA)

17.1 There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and Persistent Absenteeism, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC/ PLAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with a social worker
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination
- Children receiving support from Youth Justice Services

17.2 The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading **weekly** check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

17.3 The school will focus particularly on pupils who have high rates of absence and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

17.4 Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may constitute neglect and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

18.0 Legal intervention

18.1 The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after a **6 week period**, the Attendance Lead will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the Education Inclusion Service.
- Working with the LA to put an attendance contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

18.2 Where attendance still does not improve, the school will work with the LA to take forward legal intervention which could include Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution. This course of action is always a last resort.

19.0 Monitoring and analysing absence

19.1 The Attendance Lead responsible for attendance will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

19.2 The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC, and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

19.3 The Attendance Lead responsible for attendance will review the school's data weekly to check for emerging issues. On a half termly basis the Attendance Lead will undertake a thorough analysis of the above data to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

19.4 The Attendance Lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance Lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future. The Attendance Lead will ensure that this is then shared with the Trust Central Team accordingly.

19.5 The Local Governing Board and the Trust central team will regularly monitor attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

19.6 The school will also benchmark its attendance data against Trust, local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

19.7 The Trust Board will ensure staff from different schools within the Trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

20.0 Training of staff

20.1 The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training. All staff will understand that absence is almost invariably a symptom of wider circumstances and should be viewed as an indicator requiring support and investigation rather than simply a behaviour issue.

20.2 The Local Governing Board will monitor that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

20.3 Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

20.4 The Local Governing Board will monitor the provision of dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Attendance Lead and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

20.5 Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

21.0 Monitoring and review

21.1 Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97% but no less than 96%** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website** once they have been outlined by the DFE.

21.2 This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Trust.

21.3 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St James' C of E Primary School 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:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and Attendance Lead detailing **weekly** and **annual** attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and Attendance Lead daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to **96 percent**, the Attendance Lead speaks to the parent to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **96 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.
7. The Attendance Lead tracks the pupil's attendance carefully following this discussion. If the attendance improves the Attendance Lead phones home to thank the parent for working with the school to address this.
8. If a pupil's attendance continues to fall and drops below **90 percent**, a second letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being formally monitored, and the Attendance Lead contacts the parents to discuss this.
9. 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 classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, the school may contact Gloucestershire's Education Inclusion Service, who will discuss next steps. In the event that parents cannot attend a meeting in school, the Attendance Lead will seek to resolve this through use of other mechanisms such as a Teams meeting or finding a time outside of the school core hours.
10. After the **two-week** monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **96 percent or above**.
11. If targets are not met, the Attendance Lead makes a referral to the LA Education Inclusion Service and a decision is made as to the next steps that will be taken to safeguard the pupil. In line with the DFE guidance this could include an Attendance Contract, an Education Supervision Order or prosecution. Prosecution is the last resort but can result in a fine of up to £1,000. The Decision to prosecute remains solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority. If the pupil has an allocated social worker or is a looked-after child, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.