The John Roan School
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

# Attendance Policy

2026 - 2027

*Dated:* September 2026
*Approved by Governing Body:* October 2026
*For Review:* September 2027

# Contents

**Contents** ..... **1**

**Summary – Attendance at a Glance** ..... **2**
Attendance Matters ..... 2
Absence through illness or unforeseen circumstances ..... 2
Attending an Appointment ..... 2
Known Absence ..... 3
Support ..... 3
Punctuality ..... 3

**Part A – Policy** ..... **3**
1. Introduction ..... 3
2. Aims ..... 5
2.1. Effects of non-attendance ..... 6
3. Safeguarding and Attendance ..... 6
4. Legislation and Guidance ..... 6
5. Using data to support improvements in attendance ..... 7
6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance ..... 7
7. Staff Training on Attendance ..... 8

**Part B – What the Law Says and Our Procedures** ..... **9**
1. Roles and Responsibilities ..... 9
2. Contents of the Admissions Register ..... 9
3. Contents of Attendance Register ..... 10
4. Attending the School (and Lateness) ..... 10
5. Attending a place other than the school ..... 10
6. Absent – Leave of absence ..... 11
6.1. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances' ..... 11
6.2. Medical/Dental Appointments ..... 12
6.3. Part-time timetables – Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable ..... 12
7. Absent – other authorised reasons ..... 12
7.1. Mobile student – Parent travelling for occupational purposes ..... 12
7.2. Religious Observance ..... 13
7.3. Illness ..... 13
7.4. Suspensions (Exclusions) ..... 14
8. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause ..... 14
9. Absent – unauthorised absence ..... 14
10. Administrative codes ..... 15
11. First Day of Absence Response ..... 15
12. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance ..... 16
13. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave) ..... 16
14. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions ..... 16
15. Children Missing Education (CME) ..... 17
16. Following up Unexplained Absences ..... 17
17. Reporting to Parents ..... 18
18. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence ..... 18
19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements ..... 18
20. Links with other policies ..... 18
Appendix A – 5 Foundations of Effective Practice ..... 20
Appendix B – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes ..... 21

# Summary – Attendance at a glance

## Attendance Matters

Here at The John Roan School, we have the highest expectations across all areas of school life including attendance. We value positive relationships between both staff and students and want all students to feel they belong here and are valued. We work with our students to ensure that they have the highest possible attendance at school. We believe that this is the best way for them to succeed and to get the most out of all we have to offer.

There is a clear link between academic outcomes and school attendance. We want all students to achieve excellent outcomes to give themselves the very best chance in life.

There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments. There is no need, except in extreme circumstances, to miss a day's education. If you miss one session in a week (remember, there are two sessions per day) your attendance is 90%. This means you miss 19 days of education in a year and risk dropping one grade in your GCSEs.

It is vital we work together to teach our students the value of attending school, each and every day. However, we do appreciate that at times, students may not be able to attend school. We ask our parents/carers to follow the processes below. They support our safeguarding procedures.

Should you have a concern about your child's attendance, then we ask that you contact us to discuss this. We believe in strong partnerships across all parts of school life. This includes attending school.

It is also important to us that students arrive at school on time, and they must be at school by 8:25am.

## Absence through illness or unforeseen circumstances

The school day starts promptly at 8:25am, when all students greet their class teacher in the school playground. The register for the first lesson should be taken no later than 8:35am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session should be taken no later than 1:35pm and will be kept open until 2:00pm. Teachers should ensure all registers taken are accurate and up to date.

In the event of a student being unable to attend school, parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible, prior to 8:00am, to inform the school of the reason for absence. This can be completed by calling or emailing the school:

Absence phoneline: 020 8516 7558

Absence email address: absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason. This is to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code to use. Where a parent has failed to inform the school of their child's absence from school, the school will inform parents of their child's absence via text message in the first instance. Parents are requested to respond to this message by providing appropriate information regarding their child's absence. School staff will also call all parents of absent students to check in with them and, where required, offer additional support. Where the school has not been informed of a child's absence for three consecutive days, this will result in a home visit from school staff. School staff may also visit a student at home where there has been a longer period of absence for wellbeing checks. Parents may also contact their child's Head of Year to discuss any longer periods of absence where additional support may be considered.

## Attending an Appointment

Wherever possible, please schedule dental and non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours. We recognise this may not always be possible for hospital appointments. If an appointment takes place during the school day, students are expected to attend school before the appointment and return afterwards.

Parents/carers must provide a medical letter, appointment card or other evidence for our records. Students must be collected from and returned to school if the appointment ends during the school day. For more details, check section 6.2 of the policy.

### Known Absence

Your child may need to be absent from school for exceptional reasons. In such cases, parents/carers should submit a request to the Principal using the form below. Wherever possible, requests should be made at least four weeks in advance and the completed form should be emailed to absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk.

Requests for term-time leave will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The school expects any approved absence to be for the shortest time possible; however, submitting a request does not guarantee that it will be authorised.

If the Principal does not authorise the absence, any time taken away from school will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in legal action being considered, in line with statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the case.

The school is required to follow national attendance regulations and, as a result, term-time leave will not normally be authorised. In certain circumstances, unauthorised absence may also result in the issue of a penalty notice. For more details, please check the Attendance Policy and Procedures (section 6.1).

### Support

We take absence very seriously. We are committed to supporting any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly. We will monitor attendance closely and will target support where attendance patterns cause concern, including where attendance falls below 95%.

Further information on support can be found in the full policy.

### Punctuality

All students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8:25am. Lessons start promptly at 8:30am and therefore poor punctuality will be detrimental to student progress. Any student arriving after 8:25am is expected to sign in via the school inventory system which will record the time of arrival. Students are also requested to provide a reason for being late to school. All late marks and times of arrival are recorded as part of the school management system. Where students arrive late, a detention will be issued. Where students arrive late on two occasions per week, this will escalate to a School Based Reflection.

### How we manage lateness to school and lessons

Parents may face prosecution if their child is often late after the register has closed. We'll watch for this and offer support. If the problem persists, we might take action.

The rest of this document outlines our Attendance Policy and Procedures. We encourage all parents to review it. This ensures they understand how we handle attendance. If getting your child to school is hard, please contact your child's Head of Year immediately.

## Part A – Policy

### 1. Introduction

This Attendance Policy outlines the culture and approach to supporting good attendance at our academy. The second part of the document outlines the more detailed procedures, roles and responsibilities related to student attendance that operate at our academy. Through all that we do to manage attendance, we are committed to creating a positive learning environment, supporting student achievement, and complying with legal requirements.

This is a successful academy, and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is therefore very important that parents[1] make sure that children attend regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. **Ensuring your child's regular attendance is your legal responsibility**.

The principles of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

| **Support first approach (as set out in DfE guidance)** | |
|---|---|
| **Expect** | Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. |
| **Monitor** | Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. |
| **Listen and understand** | When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. |
| **Facilitate support** | Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues. |
| **Formalise support** | Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order. |
| **Enforce** | Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education. |

*[1] The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to all the legislation to which this guidance relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this guidance uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers.*

## 2. Aims

Our aim is to create a school environment where children feel they belong and want to come to school. We believe our school is a great place to learn, and that being in school day in, day out, is in the best interests of all our students. However, we recognise that there will be times when there may be barriers that prevent children from attending school. In these instances, we will act early to understand the issue, provide support and work with the child and their family to get them back to regular attendance as quickly as possible.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our students' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, students and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[2] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy, we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[3] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our students to go to school every day unless they are not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our students to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". Therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the student's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

---

*[2] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.*

*[3] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.*

We will do all we can to encourage our students to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can for any student who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting students at school with medical conditions', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – or ask the school for printed copies.

### 2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days' absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

| Attendance during school year | Days lost in a year | Which is approximately | Approximate number of lessons missed |
|---|---|---|---|
| 95% | 9.5 Days | 2 Weeks | 50 Lessons |
| 90% | 19 Days | 4 Weeks | 100 Lessons |

## 3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all students as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a student's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with the government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any student who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the student's welfare.

## 4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (published May 2022 and applying from 19 August 2024) and the accompanying Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (August 2024).

It also reflects the current statutory framework for attendance enforcement, including the National Framework for Penalty Notices introduced in 2024, and replaces reliance on earlier standalone guidance on parental responsibility measures.

This policy is informed by the following legislation, which sets out the legal powers and duties governing school attendance:

- Education Act 1996 (particularly sections 7, 19 and 444–447)
- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Sentencing Act 2020
- School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Information about Individual Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which establish a national framework for the use of penalty notices for unauthorised absence in England

## 5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a student as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions across the school year, for whatever reason. Students who miss more than 50% of their possible sessions are classified as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that attendance data is routinely monitored, analysed and acted upon to identify emerging concerns and prevent attendance issues becoming entrenched. Attendance information will be used to:

- identify students whose attendance is declining or causing concern
- identify patterns and trends within groups of students, including vulnerable groups
- understand barriers to attendance and target support effectively
- evaluate the impact of attendance interventions and support strategies
- inform discussions with students, parents, governors and external agencies where appropriate.

The school will make use of available DfE attendance data tools, including the Monitor Your School Attendance (MYSA) service and the View Your Education Data platform, where available. These tools enable schools to identify attendance trends, analyse attendance among specific student groups, compare attendance with local and national benchmarks, and target resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Attendance data will be considered alongside wider information about a student's circumstances, recognising that absence is often a symptom of underlying issues. Where concerns are identified, the school will seek to work in partnership with students, parents and relevant professionals to understand barriers and provide timely support before attendance deteriorates further. This approach reflects the principles set out in the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance and its guidance on communicating effectively with parents about attendance.

The school will regularly review attendance data for vulnerable groups, including students with SEND, disadvantaged students, children in care, previously looked-after children, students subject to child protection plans, children in need, and any other groups identified through local analysis. Targeted support will be implemented where attendance data indicates a student is at risk of becoming persistently or severely absent.

## 6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all students and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

We recognise that strong relationships between home and school are fundamental to improving attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Communications will be tailored to individual circumstances where appropriate, will focus on understanding barriers to attendance, and will provide clear information about available support.

We will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support students and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with

parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these students face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period and to support students to reintegrate back into education to access full-time provision.

The school is committed to sharing information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## 7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard students. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school will therefore facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school/trust strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
- the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to students who need it.

Staff with specialist attendance responsibilities will receive training to include:

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data
- any additional training that would be beneficial to support students and student cohorts to overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

# Part B – What the Law Says and Our Procedures

## 1. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Senior Attendance Lead** responsible for attendance and punctuality will provide strategic oversight of the school's attendance systems, ensuring that attendance is rigorously monitored, analysed and acted upon. They will lead the school's attendance improvement strategy, hold staff accountable for implementing attendance procedures, and work with families and external agencies to secure high levels of attendance and punctuality for all students.

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Nicholas Taylor-Mullings - Nicholas.Taylor-Mullings@thejohnroanschool.org.uk.

**The Attendance Officer** will monitor daily attendance and punctuality, identify patterns of absence or lateness, and take timely action to address concerns. They will work closely with students, families, staff and external agencies to promote good attendance, provide appropriate support, and ensure accurate attendance records are maintained. This person also co-ordinates requests for term-time leave of absence (this includes liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Team) and advises the principal as requested.

- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on "day 1" will fall to the School Attendance Officer – absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to the School Attendance Officer – absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk
- Information and contact details of the school staff who students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are: School Attendance Officer – absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk

**The Head of Year** will take a proactive role in promoting good attendance and punctuality within their year group. They will monitor attendance patterns, follow up concerns with students and families, and work closely with the Attendance Officer, pastoral staff and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance and ensure students attend school regularly and on time. Particular attention will be given to vulnerable students, with timely support, intervention and multi-agency working used to help secure regular attendance and safeguard their welfare. More detailed support on attendance can be requested from a student's Head of Year.

**The Local Governing Body**
The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

**The Principal**
The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## 2. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every student in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the student will attend.

A student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if one of the reasons set out in regulation 9 of the **School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, as it is a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

## 3. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken, the appropriate attendance and absence code must be entered for every student. Please refer to **Working Together To Improve School Attendance** for the code descriptors and also **Appendix B** of this document. The school must record whether each student is:

- Attending, or
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguarding children and improving attendance, and is supported by our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

## 4. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Students are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a student leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our students must arrive by 8:25am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 9:00am.

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:35pm.

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a student arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U), which is an unauthorised absence mark.

However, if the student is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

## 5. Attending a place other than the school

Students are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
- Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of students attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the student. Our school should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the student's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a student is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or Student Referral Unit for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the student to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a student is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Student Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions in which the student attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity).

The school expects the alternative provision (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual students, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow-up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision (AP).

## 6. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the student's absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

### 6.1. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case, following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should contact the Principal via the Attendance Office: absence@thejohnroanschool.org.uk

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe,** rather **than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or forced marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term-time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with Social Care and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before the school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term-time absence for a child in care.

### 6.2. Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

No student will be allowed to leave the school site to attend a medical appointment during the school day without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

Parents/carers must notify the school in advance of any medical or dental appointment and provide appropriate evidence, such as an appointment card, letter, text message or other confirmation from the healthcare provider. Evidence may be presented at reception or sent to the Attendance Officer. Students should attend school before their appointment and return to school afterwards wherever reasonably possible. Where attendance for the full day is not possible, students are expected to be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary. Any absence relating to a medical or dental appointment will only be authorised where appropriate evidence has been provided.

### 6.3. Part-time timetables – Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable

Students are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

Where a student is temporarily unable to access a full-time education, the school will work with the Local Authority, parents and relevant professionals to support a return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

## 7. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

### 7.1. Mobile student – Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile student of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes, in which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

### 7.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

The school will authorise absence for days exclusively set apart for religious observance, in line with statutory guidance and individual circumstances. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### 7.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)' 2024[4], which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and student, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the student's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual student.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a student has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may consider requesting medical evidence where reasonable and proportionate, taking account of accessibility, SEND, and individual circumstances. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of any illness-related absence by 8:00am, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Notification should be made by telephone or email and must include the student's full name, Year Group or Form, the name and relationship of the person reporting the absence, and the reason for the absence. Parents/carers should keep the school informed of any continuing absence. Where there are concerns regarding the authenticity of an illness, or where a student's attendance falls below 90%, the school may request medical evidence before authorising the absence.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

[4] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by dialling 111 for advice if they are concerned. In an emergency, parents should dial 999.

### Students taken ill during the school day

If a student needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, no student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

## 7.4. Suspensions (Exclusions)

In this policy, the word 'suspension' is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period. Suspensions and permanent exclusions are both types of exclusion, and where this policy uses the word 'exclusion' this includes both suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) and permanent exclusions.

If the school decides to send a student home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an exclusion. The school will follow the DfE's current statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions. The full behaviour and exclusions policy for our school can be found here.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Principal.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the student is a Child in Care, the school will notify the student's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a student is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

## 8. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record students as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

## 9. Absent – unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a student is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing and in advance by the school)
- In the case of term-time leave, if a student is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal action being considered, in line with statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the case.

The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

## 10. Administrative Codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective student not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

## 11. First Day of Absence Response

Where a student is absent and no reason has been provided, the Attendance Officer will undertake first-day contact procedures. Parents/carers are expected to notify the school by 8:00am on the first day of absence. If no reason has been received by 9:00am, the school will contact parents/carers between 9:00am and 10:00am to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the student is safe. Initial contact will normally be by text message, followed by telephone calls where necessary. All contact attempts will be recorded.

The school will refer to the student's emergency contact details and will make reasonable attempts to contact all available parents/carers and emergency contacts where there are concerns regarding a student's whereabouts or welfare.

Priority will be given to vulnerable students, including those subject to a Child Protection Plan, Children in Need, Looked After Children, and any student identified as vulnerable through the school's safeguarding processes. In such cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, Children's Social Care will be informed in line with safeguarding procedures.

Where the school has not established the reason for absence by the third consecutive day, a home visit will be undertaken. The school may also undertake earlier home visits where there are safeguarding concerns or where a student is considered particularly vulnerable.

Parents/carers are required to provide the school with at least three emergency contacts and must ensure that all contact details remain accurate and up to date. Contact information will be reviewed annually, and parents/carers are expected to notify the school immediately of any changes. Where the school is unable to contact a parent/carer regarding a student's absence, illness, welfare or safety, the school may contact any of the emergency contacts provided.

Where concerns remain and a student’s whereabouts cannot be established, the school may escalate concerns in line with safeguarding procedures, including contacting appropriate external agencies.

## 12. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school recognises and rewards excellent and improved attendance through a range of measures, including attendance certificates, recognition in assemblies, rewards events, enrichment opportunities and participation in pastoral trips and extra-curricular activities. Attendance is celebrated regularly at individual, tutor group and year group level. The school also recognises significant improvements in attendance to encourage sustained engagement and ensure that all students have the opportunity to experience success.

## 13. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes students can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and students to be open and honest with us about the reason for the student's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a student is reluctant to attend to be able to support students and parents in the best way.

The school will seek to work in partnership with parents, assuming positive intent and recognising that parents want the best for their child. Discussions about attendance will focus on identifying barriers and agreeing practical solutions wherever possible.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a student, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Head of Year to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a student who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

## 14. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure the regular attendance of a registered student of compulsory school age. This applies to resident and non-resident parents, and to any person who has care of the child, each of whom may be subject to legal sanctions if a child does not attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence from school can lead to a range of outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered on an individual, case-by-case basis, taking account of the reasons for absence, any support provided, and the impact on the child's education and welfare.

Where a child fails to attend school regularly, parents may be subject to legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a family has more than one school-aged child, each child's attendance is considered separately, and legal action may be taken in respect of each child.

Where unauthorised absence meets the national threshold, the school will normally request that the Local Authority considers the use of a Penalty Notice, unless there are reasonable grounds not to do so following consideration of the individual circumstances and any support provided. The Local Authority is responsible for deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice or to proceed directly to prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended to address lower-level offences and to act as a deterrent to improve future school attendance, for example where unauthorised leave of absence has been taken during term time. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and will only be used where it is considered the most appropriate response in the individual circumstances. In some cases, prosecution may be pursued without issuing a Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absence may result in one of the following outcomes:

1. Penalty Notice. In line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices (introduced from 19 August 2024), a Penalty Notice may be issued where a student has accrued 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10-school-week period, or in other circumstances where support is not appropriate, such as unauthorised leave of absence in term time.
    - The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent for a child is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between days 22 and 28.
    - A second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period is £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days, with no option to pay a lower amount.
    - A third offence within a rolling three-year period (within the last three years) will not result in a further Penalty Notice and is likely to result in prosecution. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution.
2. Prosecution. Prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 may result in a fine of up to £2,500, and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to three months, depending on the offence.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and in respect of each individual child. For example, where two parents are responsible for two children with irregular attendance, up to four Penalty Notices may be issued. Penalty Notices must be paid in full and cannot be paid by instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices and prosecution, a range of other legal interventions may be used where appropriate. Decisions about which intervention to pursue are made in partnership with the Local Authority and take into account the individual circumstances of the family. These include attendance contracts (previously known as parenting contracts), Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Orders and attendance prosecution.

The school will work closely with the Local Authority to ensure that the most appropriate intervention is used, in line with the statutory support-first approach, rather than relying solely on Penalty Notices or prosecution.

## 15. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete students from roll in line with the law. A student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if one of the reasons set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies. The school will make CME and Student Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the local authority representative responsible for children missing education if unsure about any individual cases.

## 16. Following up Unexplained Absences

Parents and carers are expected to notify the school of their child's absence by 8:00am on the first day of absence. Where no reason for absence has been received, the school will contact parents and carers on the same day to establish the reason for the absence and ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed.

The school will follow up all unexplained absences to ascertain the reason for the absence, determine whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised, and ensure the correct attendance code is recorded. Where no reason for absence has been provided, the absence will initially be recorded as code N (reason not provided). Once the reason for absence has been established, the attendance register will be updated accordingly. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason provided, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence using code O.

Where the school has not been informed of a student's absence for three consecutive days, a home visit will be undertaken by school staff. The school may also undertake home visits during extended periods of absence to carry out welfare checks and offer appropriate support to students and families. If we are concerned about a student's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the student's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the student's whereabouts.

## 17. Reporting to Parents

Attendance communications will be proportionate, personalised and age-appropriate. The school will recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance as well as high attendance, ensuring that communications remain supportive and inclusive for students whose attendance is affected by illness, SEND or other circumstances beyond their control.

The school recognises the importance of keeping parents/carers informed about their child's attendance. Attendance information will be shared regularly with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of their child's attendance record and can work in partnership with the school to address any concerns. Attendance data will be reported to parents/carers at least termly and may also be included in school reports and discussed during parents' evenings.

Where a student's attendance begins to decline, parents/carers may receive additional communication from the Attendance Team, Form Tutor, Head of Year or other appropriate member of staff. The school will work collaboratively with parents/carers to identify and address any barriers to regular attendance at the earliest opportunity.

Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

## 18. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

The school maintains attendance records electronically. When reporting an absence, parents/carers are required to provide the student's full name, Year Group or Form, the name and relationship of the person reporting the absence, and the reason for the absence. The school follows up all unexplained absences to ascertain the reason for the absence, ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary, and apply the correct attendance code.

## 19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

## 20. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our other relevant policies that pertain to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), supporting students with medical conditions, admissions, exclusions, alternative provision, and student welfare.

### Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, updated June 2026; applies from 19 August 2024)

National Framework for Penalty Notices introduced in 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

Keeping children safe in education

School census guidance and regulation

Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (DfE) (July 2026)

Travel to School for Pupils of Compulsory School Age

## Appendix A – 5 Foundations of Effective Practice

**Foundation 1:** The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.

**Foundation 2:** The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.

**Foundation 3:** The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.

**Foundation 4:** Data, information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns; these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.

**Foundation 5:** Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

## Appendix B – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

| Attending | |
|---|---|
| **/ ** | Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session |
| **L** | Late arrival before the register is closed |
| **K** | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| **V** | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| **P** | Participating in a sporting activity |
| **W** | Attending work experience |
| **B** | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| **D** | Dual registered at another school |
| Absent – Leave of absence | |
| **C1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad |
| **M** | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment |
| **J1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| **S** | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination |
| **X** | Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school |
| **C2** | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| Absent – other authorised reasons | |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made |
| Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes | |
| **Q** | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements |
| **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 student 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 |
| Absent – unauthorised absence | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed |
| Administrative Codes | |
| Z | Prospective student not on admission register |
| **#** | Planned whole school closure |