

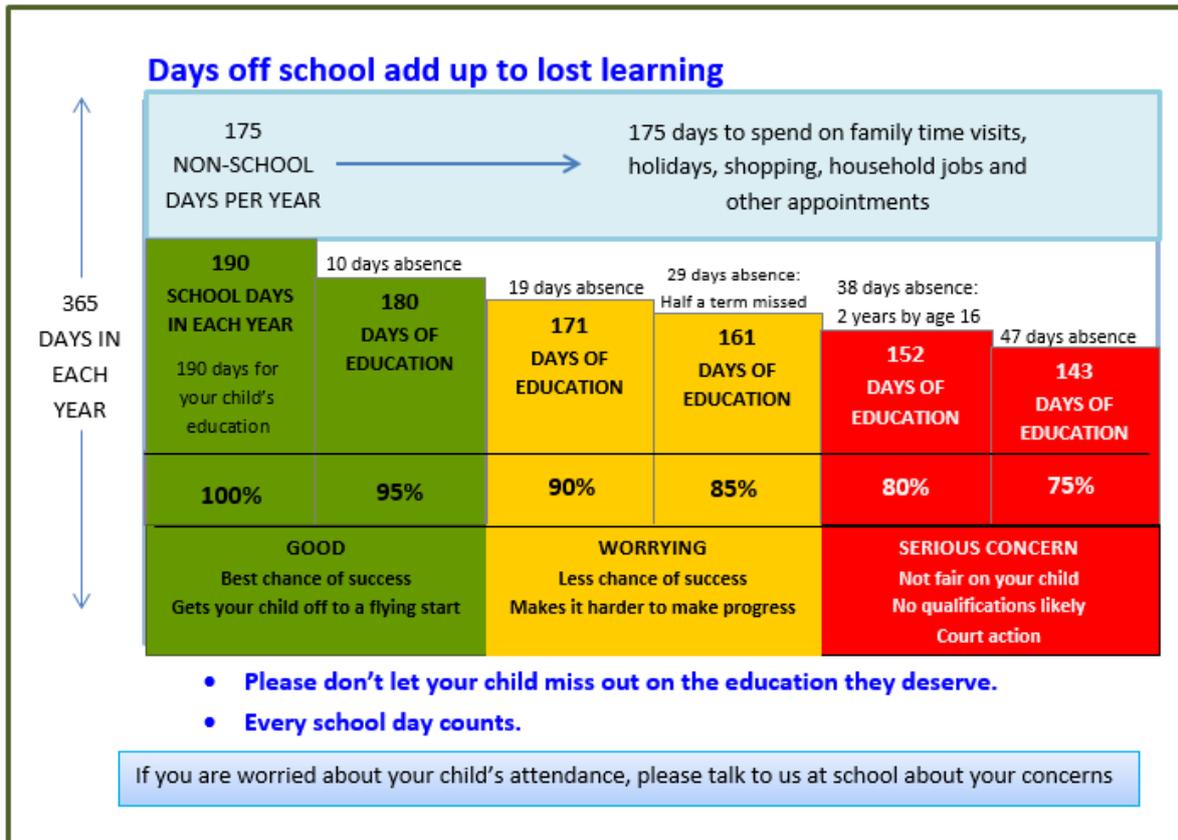


Attendance Policy

April 2016

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, which requires regular and structured attendance. John Ball expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents and carers.

All staff are concerned for the children’s welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. Good attendance tracking is a key part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding our pupils and as such this policy should be considered alongside our safeguarding policy. We also have a legal responsibility to keep track of who is in school.



Since introducing a revised set of policies and procedures relating to attendance the school has seen its overall attendance increase from 94.9% in July 2009 to 97.2% in July 2015 i.e. from below the national average (95%) to above average. This policy lays out the responsibilities of the school and of parents / carers, and aims to build on this progress.

Everyday procedures and expectations

By following our simple procedures for attendance and punctuality, parents / carers can give their children the best chance of success at school. Setting expectations for this aspect of daily life also puts in place good personal habits for their working life.

Parents / carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that every pupil comes to school on every school day unless they are unwell.
- Ensuring that every pupil comes to school on time and is collected on time. That means being in the playground by 8.55am ready to go into school when the bell rings at 9am, when children will be met by their class teacher or teaching assistant and escorted to their classroom for registration.
- Ensuring that children are collected from school on time, which means being in the playground ready to collect children at 3.15 / 3.20pm.
- Reporting any absence to the school by telephone by 9am on each day of absence, including the reason for absence. If you are running late you should also telephone the school. There is a voicemail system for you to leave a message.
- If pupils arrive late to school (after 9.00am), they must be escorted to the school office by a parent / carer and collect a late slip, which the pupil must give to their teacher. This ensures that the school has a record that the child has arrived, because their teacher will already have closed the register and sent it to the office.
- If a pupil needs to miss any school time (for example a medical appointment which cannot be arranged for outside of school hours), this must be notified in advance to the office.
- Parents / carers are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school with their class teacher. Even small things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Time off during term time is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. If a parent / carer wishes to request time off during term time they must follow the process in this document in advance.

The school and its staff are responsible for:

- Knowing and keeping accurate records of which pupils are in school for each half-day session of the school term. This means using the registration process described later in this document.
- Ensuring they know the reason for any absence. This means contacting any family whose child is not in school, if no notification of absences has been received.
- Monitoring levels and patterns of absence and lateness, and discussing these with parents / carers if they become persistent.

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Aims of this policy

- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents / carers and pupils.
- To provide a framework for ensuring good attendance, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- To provide support and guidance for parents / carers and pupils.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To reinforce the policy by implementing a system for rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnership with Attendance Welfare Service and other agencies.

Responsibilities of the school and its staff

Class teachers are responsible for:

- marking the register electronically, twice daily, and ensuring it is sent to the office on each occasion. The am register should not be sent before 9.10am.
- alerting the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Pastoral Care Manager to any concerns they have about the late coming and attendance of individual pupils.

The JB Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- recording twice daily (am and pm) each class attendance from the registration sheets.
- recording latecomers during the day.
- recording children leaving the school during the day.
- recording children collected late at the end of the day.
- providing the details of attendance to the Headteacher¹ and other staff on request.
- recording any verbal or written reason for absence, given by an adult.
- sending daily emails to SLT regarding attendance about children who are being monitored/ referred to the AWO and any issues arising.
- providing the registers for each class to the relevant class teacher during a fire drill/fire, together with any information regarding latecomers/children having left the building from the late book in order to provide the class total.
- recording any child arriving after 9.20am with a "U" code on the register, which will mean that they will be shown as absent on the register for the morning session of that day (but present in the building in case of evacuation).

The Pastoral Care Manager is responsible for:

- liaising closely with the JB Attendance Officer, who operates the Wauton Samuels electronic registration system.
- recording problems of poor attendance and punctuality – delegated to the JB Attendance Officer in the admin team.
- liaising with parents / carers/carers when concerns arise.
- liaising with the Local Authority Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO) – half termly visits.

¹ The term "Headteacher" is used throughout this document for simplicity and is defined as the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, Head of School, or their deputy in case of absence.

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- Agreeing with the Headteacher when further actions need to be taken e.g. writing letters to alert parents / carers to low attendance or poor punctuality
- liaising with the school's Inclusion Team when concerns arise through the Joint Support Team.
- Liaising with the JB Attendance Officer to identify pupils who qualify for termly rewards in line with this policy

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- making decisions regarding any leave of absence.
- recording of the annual return to the Department for Education – delegated to the attendance officer in the admin team.
- ensuring that daily monitoring of all children's attendance is taking place, including those pupils who are being specifically monitored pre referral or on referral to the Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO).

Communication

We communicate to parents / carers at a several points during their life with the school and during each school year.

- The school **promotes good attendance and punctuality** to pupils and parents / carers by publishing, weekly statistics in JBuzz, high visibility of the Senior Leadership Team at the school gates, assemblies, class teacher reminders, career fairs and 1:1 sessions with school staff.
- Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the school **prospectus**. This emphasises the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if a child is absent for any reason.
- The importance of regular termly attendance is discussed and explained at the pre-school **induction meetings** held for children about to enter reception class. This reiterates that parents / carers and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children in particular should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Authorised and unauthorised absences are also explained.
- The **first JBuzz of the year** will set out policy and expectations - this can also be found on the school website, along with an electronic copy of this policy.
- At the end of each academic term, **pupils are rewarded** for their attendance and punctuality.
 - Pupils with 99% attendance or higher and no lates to school receive a certificate. Pupils in KS1/KS2 with 100% and no lates also receive a reward e.g. a medal.
 - Pupils with attendance between 95-98% and no lates to school receive a certificate.
 - Where pupils have made improvements to their attendance and punctuality over a term, they will receive a certificate in recognition of this.

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- Where a pupil has ongoing need to attend medical appointments due to a diagnosed illness then these absences will be excluded from the calculation of rewards.
- Parents / carers are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. At John Ball family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents / carers are reminded in JBuzz on a regular basis that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits.
- All parents / carers requesting a place for admission during the school year are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular punctuality & attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

Reporting of absence

- John Ball uses a computerised registration system and the register is completed at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Parents / carers are instructed to telephone the school on the first day of their child's absence and every day until their return. The information received will be entered in the attendance registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the school attendance officer will phone the parent/carer to find out why the child is not at school. If no reason is given for absence or reason is not acceptable, then the absence will be unauthorised on the register.
- All nursery absences should be reported to the school on the day of absence and thereafter each day with the reason. All children will be monitored as with the main school and if absences fall below 85% this could result in the place being withdrawn.
- Where children are not collected from school on time at the end of the day staff take children to the school office where they are then signed in as being collected late. If we have no contact about the reason for late collection we will contact parents / carers to ascertain why they are late and what is happening.
- Parents / carers and carers should note if the school cannot contact them regarding absence or children not collected one hour after the end of the school day, then contact will be made with the recorded emergency contacts, and if no explanation is given as to the whereabouts of the child, we follow the Local Authority's procedures which includes informing the LA AWO and may include informing Social Services.

Monitoring of attendance and punctuality

- The JB Attendance Officer is responsible for collating attendance records in school and notifies the Headteacher if there is any reason for concern. Throughout the year each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents / carers, with their child's school report, at the end of year.

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- The annual report to parents / carers records the school's attendance figure for authorised and unauthorised absence. The Headteacher reports attendance figures to the Governing Body 4 times a year.
- All pupils' attendance and punctuality is reviewed every half term, with daily checks for children with particularly low attendance or who have been referred to the LA AWO.
- Whilst we allow 10 mins before the register is sent for the odd occasion when a family is late for school or where a parent / carer has multiple drop offs to do, where we have evidence that a child is persistently arriving at school late between 9.00 and 9.10am we will contact the parent / carer to discuss this matter.
- The Headteacher, Pastoral Care Manager, AWO and JB Attendance Officer meet termly for a full register check.
 - Parents / carers of children with under 95% attendance are sent a letter from the Headteacher as a reminder to parents / carers that their child's attendance is falling below the national average.
 - Children with attendance under 85% or where unsatisfactory reasons have been given for attendance are referred to the AWO.
 - The Pastoral Care Manager, AWO and JB Attendance Officer meet every six weeks to review children with three consecutive broken weeks or attendance below 95%. Parents / carers will be contacted through letters and referrals made as necessary.
- The Pastoral Care Manager and JB Attendance Officer work closely with families who have persistently low attendance and/or punctuality, to help identify the causes of these issues and work together to find solutions.

Absence through illness

- While attendance at school is important, children who are unwell should not attend.
 - If they are unwell or injured such that they are unable to concentrate / participate in class activities, they should be kept at home until they feel better.
 - If they may be infectious, they should be kept at home to avoid infecting other children and staff. This includes for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- At John Ball we monitor pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and maintain close links with parents / carers to ensure that the amount of missed school is limited. We continue to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning. In some cases of chronic illness, individual tutoring may be instigated by LA.
- Reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents / carers about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff, including the class teacher, teaching assistants, Pastoral Care Manager and home or hospital tutor will meet to discuss the child's return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged

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to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

- In some cases medical evidence may be requested to explain poor attendance i.e. letter from GP, copies of prescriptions, medical appointments.

Time off during term time

The Headteacher can only authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances such as the serious and significant illness of a pupil, bereavement or serious ill health of a close family relative, wedding of a parent, attendance at court or other circumstances deemed to be exceptional by the Headteacher in consultation with the AWO.

The process is:

1. Obtain a request form from the school office / school website.
2. Fill in form giving reasons for request for leave and return to school office.
3. Authorisation of time off can only be granted by the Headteacher.
4. The JB Attendance Officer will check attendance and inform Headteacher of request.
5. The Headteacher will then make a decision based on previous and current year's attendance and where they are with regard to their overall percentage of attendance. They will also consider the impact on the child's education, e.g. current academic picture including progress rates, proximity to SATs or other important periods. If a child has low attendance and the request will further lower the overall absence figure, the request will not be granted. If the Headteacher does not sanction the absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised.
6. A letter will then be sent to parents / carers informing them as to whether the holiday has been authorised or not. If it has not been authorised and the parents / carers decide to take the holiday, the local authority may serve a fixed penalty notice. This could result in a Penalty Notice or fine of £60.00 per pupil and per parent; failing to pay this within the time scale would result in the fine doubling. Failing to pay this fine could result in parents / carers facing prosecution.

This policy was originally written by the Headteacher, AWO and JB Attendance Officer through consultation with the Governing Body.

Policy to be reviewed in July 2019 or before should government legislation require us to.

Appendix 1: Procedure for daily registers

This procedure is carried out by the JB Attendance Officer in the admin team.

1. Clear the registers no later than 8.45am.
2. Set up the days registers for teachers to enter children into.
3. Take phone calls and messages from answer machine.
4. Enter on to Wauton Samuels (WS: the school's electronic reporting and recording system) with code and reason.
5. At 9am monitor the registers to ensure that ALL received by 9.15am (teachers to keep registers open till 9.10am then send to office).
6. Children are late if they arrive at school after 9am. They will be required to report to the main office to be registered on a daily late sheet and receive a late slip, which must be handed to their teacher.
7. The late children will be entered onto WS with code and time. Class teachers should do this between 9am and 9.10am when they send the register. The school office will note the time of late arrival after 9am.
8. From WS a list of children who are not in school and no reason has been received will be printed off.
9. The parent / carer of each absent child will be contacted via emergency contact numbers provided, and details taken of reason for absence.
10. These will then be input on to WS.
11. If unable to contact parents / carers then Headteacher will be informed by 10am.
12. If required school will contact Attendance Welfare Officer if a pupil is not accounted for.
13. Social Welfare Officer may be contacted about a pupil if there are on-going concern.