



Joydens Wood Infant School Attendance Policy

Signed Headteacher Date

Signed Chair of Governors Date

Review: November 2019

Statement of Intent

Joydens Wood Infant School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Joydens Wood Infant School.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that a child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 09:00am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded on the sign-in computer system.

If a child is to be absent, a phone call to the school must be made by 08:15am on each day they will be absent and an anticipated return date given; if the school has not been notified of a valid reason, or it is unclear from the message, the school will endeavour to make contact by phone.

The Role of the School Staff

At Joydens Wood Infant School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Mrs H Appalanaidu, Achievement Leader, has overall responsibility for the weekly monitoring of attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher and Office notify Mrs Appalanaidu of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Sim Kaur (School Liaison Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, this is followed-up by a senior member of staff.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes).
- Parents are informed termly of the child's attendance figure (where appropriate).

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance / Punctuality

- Absence / lateness is a cause for concern – an initial letter is sent, alerting parents and asking them to contact the school with any mitigating circumstances.
- If there is little improvement or a decline – a second letter is sent, stating the requirement for medical evidence for EVERY absence thereafter. Where this is not provided, the absence is marked as unauthorised. Parents are also invited to meet with the Headteacher.
- The Family Engagement Leader may be asked to offer support, e.g. referral to the School Nurse. For cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will ask Sim Kaur (School Liaison Officer) to hold a Pre-Referral Meeting with the family, to discuss possible actions.
- If all other options have been exhausted, the school will either make an AS1 referral (School Liaison Officer works the case) or request a Penalty Notice (a one-off fine) from the Kent County Council Inclusion and Attendance Service.

Medical Issues

Medical appointments are an absence and must be recorded as such. Where possible, parents are asked to arrange appointments outside of school time. Pupils should attend school prior to and following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence.

Where individual attendance falls below 95%, medical documentary evidence must be submitted for **every** absence / lateness; this can include a copy of the medication/prescription, a stamped appointment card or a letter from a doctor/hospital.

Children should not be kept at home for minor illnesses or injuries – please see Appendix 1: Health Flyer - Should I Send My Child to School? for further guidance.

Lateness

At Joydens Wood Infant School the morning register is taken at 09:00am. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 09:30am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child).
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings.

Late Pick-Up

Joydens Wood Infant School recognises that it has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, and that this extends to having arrangements in place for dealing with children who are not collected at the end of a school day, or at the end of an authorised activity. When children are late to be picked up, two things happen: the child becomes anxious about why their parent/carer is late and staff may have to stay past their scheduled time and are delayed in their other responsibilities or late for personal commitments.

Uncollected children will be taken to the Office and the Office staff informed. All parents who are more than 15 minutes late to collect their child will receive a phone call. When the child is collected, they should be signed out on the computer system and a reason for lateness provided.

A late pick-up of any amount of minutes will be recorded and Mrs Appalanaidu will monitor the log on a weekly basis. Parents/carers who are persistently late in picking-up their children will be contacted by Miss Hately.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution (this could result in penalties of £1000 per parent, per child)

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Poor Attendance, including Family Holidays

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded (not applicable to family holidays)
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued, one per parent per child (not applicable to family holidays)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are

issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Appendix 2 Punctuality letter

Appendix 3 Initial attendance letter

Appendix 4 Second attendance letter

Appendix 5 Referral to Local Authority letter

Appendix 6 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral

Appendix 7 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request

Appendix 8 Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)

Appendix 9 Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)

Appendix 10 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request

Appendix 11 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken

Appendix 12 School Referral Pathway

Appendix 1



Should I Send My Child to School?

<p>Parent is Sick, Stressed, Hospitalised</p>	<p>YES - If you are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We are all sick at times so plan ahead for these days. Get a neighbour, relative or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up. *In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to help get your child to school – please contact Miss Hatley or the Office.</p>
<p>Chronic Diseases (Asthma, Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Epilepsy etc.)</p> <p>Chronic disease is a long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured.</p>	<p>YES – Your child should attend school. Our team are trained to assist your child with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.</p>
<p>Child Doesn't Want to go to School</p> <p>Frequent crying, fear, anger, not wanting to socialise, behaviour change, stomach ache, nausea.</p>	<p>YES– You should keep your child in school, but try to determine what is causing the changes. Talk to our team; your child may be experiencing separation anxiety or be worried about their work or friendships – we can often help!</p>
<p>Cold Symptoms</p> <p>Stuffy /runny nose, sneezing, mild cough.</p>	<p>YES - If your child is able to participate in school activities, send him or her to school. You can also pop in to administer Calpol at any time (regrettably we are unable to do so).</p>
<p>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</p> <p>The white of the eye is pink and there is a thick yellow/green discharge.</p>	<p>YES – Your child can attend school, but call a health care provider to prescribe medication/treatment.</p>
<p>Head Lice</p> <p>Intense itching of the head; may feel like something is moving.</p>	<p>YES – Your child can be in school if he or she has had an initial treatment of shampooing of hair with a product for lice. PLEASE INFORM THE SCHOOL ASAP – this will be treated confidentially and allow others to check their children.</p>
<p>Threadworms</p> <p>Sometimes cause itchiness around the bottom, which can be worse at night and disturb sleep.</p>	<p>YES - Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts.</p>
<p>Tonsillitis</p>	<p>YES – There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic.</p>
<p>Warts and Verrucae</p>	<p>YES</p>

<p>Fever</p> <p>Fever usually means illness, especially if your child has a fever of 38°C or higher as well as other symptoms like behaviour change, rash, sore throat, vomiting etc.</p>	<p>NO – If your child has a fever of 38°C or higher, keep them at home and follow NHS guidance / consult a health care provider as necessary.</p>
<p>Diarrhoea</p> <p>Frequent, loose or watery stool may mean illness but can also be caused by food and medication.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home for 48 hours from the last episode. If stool is bloody, if the child has abdominal pain, fever or vomiting, you should consult a health care provider.</p>
<p>Vomiting</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home for 48 hours from the last episode. If vomiting continues, contact a health care provider.</p>
<p>Severe Coughing</p> <p>Severe, uncontrolled, rapid coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child home and contact a health care provider. Asthma - if symptoms are due to asthma, provide treatment according to your prescription and when symptoms are controlled send your child to school.</p>
<p>Rash</p>	<p>NO – If a rash spreads quickly, is not healing, or has open weeping wounds, you should keep your child at home and have him or her seen by a health care provider.</p>
<p>Vaccine-Preventable Diseases</p> <p>Chicken Pox - fever, headache, stomach ache or sore throat, then a red itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first and then limbs and face.</p> <p>Measles & Rubella (German Measles) – swollen glands, rash that starts behind ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever and cough, red eyes.</p> <p>Mumps – fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands.</p> <p>Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched “whoop”, vomiting, very tired.</p> <p>Slapped Cheek (Fifth Disease/Parvovirus B19) – bright red rash on the cheeks.</p>	<p>NO – Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.</p> <p>Please also CONTACT THE SCHOOL ASAP so that parents / staff are aware as many of these diseases are a risk to pregnant women.</p>

Appendix 2

Address

Date

Re: Punctuality

Dear Mr and Mrs _____,

I am writing to inform you that your child has been late for school ___ times this term, which totals _____ lost learning time.

We realise being late is sometimes unavoidable. But, we also know that when students miss too much school— regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically.

It is important to us that we work together to maintain good punctuality for all children within our school. Therefore, if you feel there are any potential barriers to your child's punctuality improving, please inform us at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hatley

Appendix 3

Address

Date

Re.: Initial Attendance Letter

Dear Mr and Mrs,

I am writing to inform you that your child's current attendance is ____%. Our school's attendance target is 98%.

Whilst we understand that each child's absence circumstances are different, it is our statutory duty to inform parents when their child is at risk of falling below the government's minimum threshold of 95%.

It is important to us that we work together to maintain good attendance for all children within our school. Therefore, if you feel there are any potential barriers to your child's attendance improving, please inform us at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hatley

Appendix 4

Address

Date

Re.: Second Attendance Letter

Dear Mr and Mrs,

Following my letter dated ____, I am writing to inform you that your child's current attendance is %. They are now significantly below both our school's attendance target of 98% and the government's minimum threshold of 95%.

As we are not aware of any mitigating circumstances that are contributing to your child's falling attendance percentage, we now require that you provide medical evidence for any absences from the date of this letter. Examples of evidence accepted are: a copy of a named prescription, evidence of a long-term medical condition, an appointment card/appointment text. All unevidenced absences will be unauthorised.

It is important to us that we work together to support your child's attendance in improving rapidly to ensure they are not at risk of falling behind academically. If you feel you would like to make an appointment to discuss this matter further, please contact the school office on 01322 523188.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hately

Appendix 5

Address

Date

Re: Referral to Local Authority for Attendance

Dear Mr and Mrs,

Following my letter dated _____, I am writing to inform you that we will be making a referral to the Education Welfare Service regarding _____'s attendance, which now stands at %. This is significantly below the minimum legal requirement limit of 90%, set by the government.

We have been in contact multiple times, both by phone and letter, over the course of this academic year to offer support and to insist that medical evidence is provided when s/he is absent. Whilst we understand that you have expressed you are concerned about the number of times that _____ is becoming unwell, we have a duty of care to refer concerns, as per our Attendance Policy, to the Local Authority.

Please be aware that Sim Kaur is the Attendance Officer for our area and will be in touch to discuss your child's attendance case with you. If you have any questions or need more information please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Miss R Hatley

Appendix 6

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

'As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.' A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 7

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 8

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 9

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Request for leave during Term-Time
For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 10

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Name: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date_of_birth»

With reference to our letter dated ??date, the leave of absence taken between ??date and ??date has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

«addressee»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix 12

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

