

Juniper Hill School

Attendance and Absence Policy



Kindness Enjoyment Achievement

This policy was updated in October 2024

Review Date November 2026

This policy was adopted on 19th November 2024 at the Full Governing Body meeting
This policy was reviewed on 18th November 2025 at the Full Governing Body meeting

This policy takes account of KCSiE 2024 and the DfE guidance in 'Working together to improve school attendance'

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Statement of intent

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values and promotes good attendance.

Juniper Hill School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Juniper Hill School acts to ensure that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. The school regularly monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and to try to put effective strategies in place to resolve any difficulties.

The school understands the importance of sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authority and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Juniper Hill School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Child Protection, Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policy.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

The school's attendance officer is Claire Garnett and can be contacted via headteacher@juniper.school Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

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

- 🏠 Education Act 1996
- 🏠 Equality Act 2010
- 🏠 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- 🏠 The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- 🏠 Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 🏠 DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- 🏠 DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- 🏠 DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- 🏠 DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- 🏠 DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- 🏠 Safeguarding Policy
- 🏠 Complaints Procedures Policy
- 🏠 Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- 🏠 SEND Policy
- 🏠 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- 🏠 Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy
- 🏠 Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- 🏠 Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 🏠 Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- 🏠 Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- 🏠 Working with the Leadership Team to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- 🏠 Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- 🏠 Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 🏠 Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 🏠 Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 🏠 Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- 🏠 Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- 🏠 The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- 🏠 Appointing a member of the Leadership Team to the attendance officer role (This is the Headteacher)
- 🏠 Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- 🏠 Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- 🏠 Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- 🏠 Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 🏠 Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- 🏠 Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 🏠 Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer, at Juniper Hill School this is the Headteacher, is responsible for:

- 🏠 The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- 🏠 Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- 🏠 Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- 🏠 Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- 🏠 Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- 🏠 Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- 🏠 Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- 🏠 Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- 🏠 Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- 🏠 Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- 🏠 Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- 🏠 Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- 🏠 Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 🏠 Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- 🏠 Updating the school if their details change.
- 🏠 The attendance of their children at school.
- 🏠 Promoting good attendance with their children.

- 🏠 Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- 🏠 Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- 🏠 Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- 🏠 Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- 🏠 Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

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

Authorised absence:

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

Unauthorised absence:

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

Persistent absence (PA):

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

Missing education

- 🏠 Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8.40am. Pupils will have a morning break of 15 minutes, (Years 1 – 6) and a lunch break of one hour, children in Years 1 and 2 have a 15-minute afternoon break. Pupils will be expected to return from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.55am and will close at 9.00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm for EYFS and KS1 (closed at 1.05pm) and 1.30pm for KS2 (closed at 1.35pm) Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

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

5. Absence procedures

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

1st Day Absence

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return, parents must do this by 9.30am. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers. If the parents have not contacted the school by 9.30am, the school will text/call the parents. If they do not receive a response by 10.00am, a member of SLT will call all contact numbers the school holds for the child. If the school is unable to talk to a parent/carer by 10.15am, where possible two members of staff will visit the child's home. If the child cannot be located and Juniper staff are concerned about the child's safety, they will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

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

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistence absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the headteacher. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.





If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the headteacher will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

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

















6. Attendance register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

-  Present.
-  Absent.
-  Attending an approved educational visit.
-  Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

-  # = planned whole school closure
-  / = Present in the morning
-  \ = Present in the afternoon
-  L = Late arrival before the register has closed
-  C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
-  S = Study leave
-  C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
-  C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
-  E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
-  J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
-  I = Illness
-  M = Medical or dental appointments
-  K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
-  R = Religious observance
-  B = Off-site education activity
-  G = Unauthorised holiday

- 🚪 O = Unauthorised absence
- 🚪 U = Arrived after registration closed
- 🚪 N = Reason not yet provided
- 🚪 X = Not required to be in school
- 🚪 T = Traveller absence
- 🚪 Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- 🚪 V = Educational visit or trip
- 🚪 P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- 🚪 D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- 🚪 W = Attending work experience
- 🚪 Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- 🚪 Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- 🚪 Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- 🚪 Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- 🚪 Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- 🚪 Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- 🚪 Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

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

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

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

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to




appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

-  Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
-  When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
-  Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

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

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

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

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- 🕒 For not less than six hours a week; and
- 🕒 During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- 🕒 On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- 🕒 For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

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

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

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

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

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

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

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

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a

pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

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

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

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

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

- 🏠 Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- 🏠 Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- 🏠 Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- 🏠 Using an internal or external specialist.
- 🏠 Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- 🏠 Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- 🏠 Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- 🏠 Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- 🏠 Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- 🏠 Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- 🏠 Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Leave during lunch times

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Truancy




Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.45am and 1:00pm / 1.30pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

-  In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
-  If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
-  A penalty notice will be issued in line with the [Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy](#) where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- 🔔 The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- 🔔 The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- 🔔 A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher
- 🔔 The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- 🔔 Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- 🔔 If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- 🔔 The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- 🔔 If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- 🔔 The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- 🔔 If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- 🔔 When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- 🔔 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and consequences will be issued if deemed necessary.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer (Headteacher), supported by the Leadership Team, will:

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

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- 🏆 Weekly badges for classes with 100% attendance each week

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

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

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








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

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








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

14. Persistent absence (PA)

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

-  Children in need
-  LAC
-  Young carers
-  Pupils who are eligible for FSM
-  Pupils with EAL
-  Pupils with SEND
-  Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

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

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

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50%, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

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

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

As a Buckinghamshire Local Authority maintained school, we take a 'support first' approach to securing a pupil's regular attendance at school. Therefore, the school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- 🔔 Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- 🔔 Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- 🔔 Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

The Notice to Improve should be issued with an identified improvement period of 6 weeks (60 sessions) in order to achieve sustained change. However, if unauthorised absence continues, the Local Authority will consider issuing a penalty notice after 3 weeks (30 sessions).

Juniper does not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and will make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency.

To ensure consistent delivery of penalty notices the following criteria will apply:

- 🔔 there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).
- 🔔 if a headteacher does not authorise a request from a parent/carer for term time leave and the parent takes the leave. (School must advise parents of this and how the action conforms to the school's attendance policy).
- 🔔 persistently late after the close of the register (coded U).
- 🔔 in certain circumstances, including where ten sessions of absence comprise of unauthorised leave of absence in term time, a penalty notice can be issued without a formal warning having been issued previously.
- 🔔 where a child who has been excluded is present in a public place during the first five days a penalty notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.
- 🔔 a penalty notice may also be issued without a formal warning if a formal warning has already been issued to the parent/carer previously.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- 🚧 The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- 🚧 A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- 🚧 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check will be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:







- 🚧 Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- 🚧 Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- 🚧 Requiring the parents to access support services.
- 🚧 Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- 🚧 Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.





16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

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

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

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

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

The attendance officer (Headteacher) will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the Leadership Team in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

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

17. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

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

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

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

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- 📌 Full name
- 📌 Address
- 📌 The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- 📌 At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- 📌 If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- 📌 If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- 📌 The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

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