



Joseph Leckie Academy

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Approved by Governing Board: 11/2025

Last reviewed on: 11/2025

Next review due by: 11/2026

Purpose

The Attendance Policy details what we expect from our academy to ensure we are doing all we can to support every child to have high attendance and, therefore, improved chances of achieving their full potential, succeeding at school, and improving life chances. We expect high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being, and wider life chances

Aims

This policy is created in line with the vision and belief that regular and prompt attendance at school and to lessons supports young people's wellbeing and builds resilience. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values excellent attendance, including:

- Promoting excellent attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to identify and address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure all students have the support in place to attend School.
- To promote effective partnership with the Educational Legal Intervention team Walsall and other services and agencies and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.

Joseph Leckie Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Joseph Leckie Academy values all students and we will work with families and external agencies to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

The aim of the policy is to ensure the Academy provides a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. We will endeavour to provide an environment where every student can feel safe, healthy, and able to enjoy and achieve, be able to contribute to future economic well-being and make a positive contribution.

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 safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEN.

General Principles

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of and is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Working Together to improve school Attendance (DFE August 2024)
- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy should be read alongside National, Local and School policies and documentation on:

- Children missing education (DFE September 2024)
- Supporting children with medical conditions in school
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
- School Suspensions and permanent exclusions (DFE August 2024)
- Alternative provision
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE September 2025)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Whilst Post-16 education is non-compulsory, we maintain the school's high expectations with regard to attendance for all Joseph Leckie Sixth form students. The register must record whether the student was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Not expected to be in school (Post-16; non-compulsory school age only)

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, the school considers the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy should be fairly and consistently applied but in doing so we always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of the policy, we recognise our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and considerations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We seek to work in partnership with pupils, parents to remove barriers to attendance. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of the protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Statement of Principles

Improving attendance is everyone's business and at Joseph Leckie Academy, we take a whole school approach to maintaining excellent attendance. Every child of compulsory academy age is entitled, by law, to receive full time education and it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child attends school. Attending school regularly is not only essential for them to achieve well in their learning but it also helps them with their social and emotional development and overall well-being. Attending school regularly gives children the best opportunity to have wider and better life chances

The academy recognises that some children find it harder than others to attend school. The academy will always seek to work in partnership with parents to understand any barriers to attendance and provide support

to address these. Small dips in attendance can lead to more significant attendance difficulties that are harder to overcome. Therefore, the academy will always intervene early to understand the needs of children and families and put the right support in place as soon as attendance falls below the expected standard. Students who are absent repeatedly or for prolonged periods are being denied equality of opportunity, therefore we endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance, are given the right attention and appropriate support.

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together and the DFE use a helpful chart to describe the key stages in any attendance strategy:

Expect: Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor: Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and various cohort levels) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched and habitual.

Listen and understand concerns: When a pattern is identified, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support: Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include for example, Family First referral (originally known as Early help) where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, professionals should work together to explain the consequences clearly. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce: Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

As part of our safeguarding duties and in respect of our students, we must investigate any unexplained absences. A child absent from education, particularly repeatedly absent from education, occasions and/or prolonged periods (KCSIE, 2025), can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; radicalisation; mental health problems; substance abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them being absent from education in the future. The School will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be persistently truanting and parents/carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons for this in addition to any relevant school support systems that could help.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body:

- Promote the importance of school attendance in the Academy
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, and promote it across the Trust and Academy's ethos and policies.

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the information with the DFE and Walsall Local authority
 - The school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issue
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Ensuring Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities.
- Holding the Principal and Deputy Principal for Behaviour and Attendance to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Senior Attendance Champion

The School Attendance Champion (or Attendance Lead) is a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies as appropriate. They are responsible for:

- To lead on and embed a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, ensuring that attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- To formulate a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance and drive improvement
- Ensure the Academy is compliant with policy and statutory guidance
- Work effectively with the LA and other external agencies regarding attendance
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations, systems and processes.
- Oversee attendance and absence data analysis and ensuring the effective deployment of resources to promote high attendance
- Monitoring attendance data and identifying trends, including for vulnerable groups and students
- Communicate key attendance messages to students and parents/carers
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating targeted intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Board of Trustees

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Mrs C.O'Sullivan** and can be contacted via c.osullivan@josephleackieacademy.co.uk

Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance

The staff identified to have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality should:

- Follow the Academy's Attendance policy and re-inforce expectations through interaction and communication with students and families.
- Have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon
- Ensure all registers are completed accurately and on time every lesson, every day
- Seek explanations of absences required from pupils, parents/carers and provide support advice and guidance where required.
- Make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day and follow up with pupils and parents/carers to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the academy.
- Look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SLT Attendance Champion of any specific concerns.
- Inform the SLT Attendance Champion of any known future absences for pupils.
- Deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly through robust tracking of registers and inform SLT Attendance Champion / Assistant Head teacher (Behaviour) of any specific concerns.
- Discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality.
- Consistently and robustly apply the Academy 'graduated response to attendance'.

Parents / carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Being at school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children's future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all students, in all year groups, remain in school full-time.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children always attend school unless there is a genuine reason for them being unable to do so and that they have informed school.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time and remains in school for the duration of the school day
- Notify the Academy of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this.
- Understand that any **appointments (doctors, dentists etc.) where possible need to be made for out of school hours** to avoid their child missing any learning. Orthodontic appointments, specialist medical appointments and hospital appointments we recognise cannot always be moved to out of school hours.

- Notify the Academy of any planned absence in advance and understand that this would be **for exceptional circumstances only**. This is in line with the Department for Education guidance which states that holidays and other leave of absence should not be taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are a matter of discretion of the principal. All cases would be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- Work with the Academy to explore barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting either the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Principal or Attendance Team, who can be contacted via the school telephone number: **01922 721071**
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.

Joseph Leckie Academy requests that students not be taken out of school for term-time family holidays. Holiday requests will not be authorised and parents/carers may receive a penalty notice for holiday in term time (See Penalty Notices) as part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance.

Student Expectations

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing, and development. The Academy therefore has high expectations of students as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance. Students should be aware that:

- They are expected to attend school, on time each school day.
- They are expected to attend all timetabled lessons on time.
- They should not leave a lesson or the Academy site without permission.
- They should engage with the Academy's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy.
- Any unexplained absence will be followed up.

Persistent or severe lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the Academy. This may take the form of:

- Offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance.
- Communication with parents/carers.
- Reporting to other agencies such as children's social care.
- Escalation of cases to the local authority which may lead to formal support or attendance prosecution.

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they should speak to the Academy via their class teacher/tutor, or pastoral/safeguarding team. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

Persistent and severe absence

The Academy uses bespoke strategies to improve the attendance of pupils at risk of Persistent or Severe absence:

Persistent absence is where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more across a full year). When a pupil's attendance falls to 90% they are deemed to be persistent absentee.

Severe Absence is when a student is absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These pupils are likely to be finding it difficult to be in school or face significant barriers to their regular attendance and therefore are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

Reporting an absence

If parents/carers would like to inform the academy of their child's absence, please do so **BEFORE 8.30AM**.

In addition, parents/carers can also use the following forms of communication to alert the Academy of any absences:

1. Use the **ARBOR PARENTAL APP**
2. Calling the Academy on **01922721071 OPTION 1** reporting an absence for your child
3. If the **attendance lines are busy**, please leave a message using **OPTION 6**
4. To alert the team about any absences, please email JLAATTENDANCE@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

If you would like to speak with a member of the attendance team regarding your child's absence or if you have any concerns or worries, please contact the following:

The **Attendance Intervention Officer** is Mrs Booker who can be contacted via a.booker@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

The **Attendance Officer** is Mrs Jawanda who can be contacted via c.jawanda@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

Form Tutors (Subject staff)

- Form Tutors (subject staff) are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (**see Appendix 1**). All registers will be taken within 5 minutes of the session starting. Registers are uploaded onto Arbor.
- At Joseph Leckie Academy, we believe that **ALL STAFF** are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting the correct information onto Arbor (or to the school office if there is an issue with Arbor). The staff training (September 2025), reinforced the clear message, that **attendance is everyone's responsibility** and any absence may indicate a safeguarding concern. Staff are trained to be vigilant and mindful that prolonged or regular patterns of absence needs to be raised immediately. It is staff's responsibility to ensure that registers are taken correctly during form time and at the start of each lesson every day. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development around attendance.

Recording Attendance

The School day starts at 8.28am and ends at 3.00pm.

We expect all students to arrive to school every day by 8.28am ready for registration. Registration will start at 8.30am.

- The register for the **first session (AM)** will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am
- Students arriving after 8.30am will be marked as late ('L' code).
- Students who **arrive after 9.00am** will receive a **U CODE** (A **U code** is an unauthorised absence).

The register for the **second session (PM)** will be taken at **12.20pm (Years 8, 10 and Post 16) and 1:00pm (Years 7, 9 and 11).**

A register of all pupils is taken at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session of each school day. This is a record of the pupil's physical presence in school, or the reason they are not in school. The national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, are used. The register is a legal record of attendance, and the school preserves every entry for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Amendments to the register must only be made when a reason for the absence is subsequently established. When amendments are made, the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the person making the amendment must all be recorded.

Attendance data is shared automatically with the Department for Education.

Late procedures and Sanctions for Poor punctuality

Punctuality is an important life skill; Joseph Leckie Academy strives to ensure students understand the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time. Our expectation is that all students must arrive to school by 8:28am. Academy gates open at 8.00am. Our late procedures are as follows:

- Students who arrive late after 8.28am will receive a 30-minute detention after school on the same day.
- Students who arrive in school after 9:00am will receive a ONE HOUR DETENTION on the same day.

Persistent lateness (after registration closes, both morning and afternoon) will be treated as a form of absence and therefore the procedure for addressing both unauthorised student absence and persistent unauthorised lateness will be the same.

- i) Parents/carers will be invited to attend an informal supportive meeting, (attendance or pastoral team) barriers which may be preventing good punctuality are discussed and actions are agreed.
- ii) If there is no improvement, support will be formalised and the attendance officer will arrange a Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM) to further discuss barriers and identify how school can continue to offer support and parents/ carers may be asked to sign an attendance contract in which actions will be agreed. Referrals / requests for support to other agencies may be made.
- iii) If there continues to be no improvement against attendance targets which have been set and agreed upon in the FAM and interventions/ support offered have proved unsuccessful, the Attendance team may complete a referral to Walsall Local Authority. The LA may decide that the most appropriate action is to issue the parent /carer with a 'Notice to improve' and/or a Penalty Notice may be issued as outlined in the National penalty notice framework.

AM/PM Registration opening and closing timings.

By law Joseph Leckie Academy is required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- a. Present
- b. Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- c. Absent
- D. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session (PM) will be taken at 12.20pm (Years 8 and 10) and 2.00pm (Years 7, 9 and 11).

Amending the attendance register

Any amendments to the attendance register will include:

- e. The original entry
- f. The amended entry
- g. The reason for the amendment
- h. The date on which the amendment was made
- i. The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

A register needs to be taken for every lesson within the first 5 minutes.

If students arrive late (within the first 2 minutes) to lessons the teacher should 'L' code the attendance register (adding number of minutes late) and apply a 'late to lesson' on Arbor.

Absence reporting process

Authorised absence: absence will only be authorised where the Academy has given approval in advance for a student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification.

Only the Principal or a designated member of staff from the Academy can authorise absence. This will be done in line with Walsall Local Authority's guidance: School attendance and absence.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8.30am**, or as soon as practically possible, by using any of the following procedures:

Parents/carers can use the following forms of communication to alert the Academy of their child's absence:

1. Use the **ARBOR PARENTAL APP**
2. Calling the Academy on **01922721071 OPTION 1** reporting an absence for your child
3. If the **attendance lines are busy**, leaving a message using **OPTION 6**
4. Email the attendance team on JLAATTENDANCE@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

If you would like to speak with a member of the attendance team regarding your child's absence or if you have any concerns or worries, please contact the following:

The **Attendance Intervention Officer** is Mrs Booker who can be contacted via a.booker@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

The **Attendance Officer** is Mrs Jawanda who can be contacted via c.jawanda@josephleckieacademy.co.uk

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

If Joseph Leckie Academy has not been notified of the reason for absence the Attendance Officer will arrange for them to be contacted using our text messaging service.

- The reasons for absence will be recorded on Arbor so that staff can be informed of absence.
- Where there has been no contact from parent/carer giving reasons for absence, or if we believe additional support is required, the Attendance Officer or Home School Liaison Officer will follow the academy absence

procedure to investigate the reason for absence as follows. A phone call will be made and home visits may take place.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Text/E-mail the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If no response is received, a call home will be made and a message left. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit. If there is still no contact and the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact external agencies.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the CME team.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer / social worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: Issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

Home visits

- We pride ourselves on excellent attendance and always ensure that a home visit for any absence has occurred by Day 3 of the absence.
- Where we have concerns regarding the needs or welfare of a child, (especially those on our 'Vulnerable list'), we may conduct a home visit on day 1 or 2.
- If the home visit is unsuccessful the academy may call upon the Local Authority Services to support us to ensure the child/children's safety.
- Home visits are usually carried out by our home school liaison staff, Miss Ankrett, Mrs Ram or Mrs Pace, but other colleagues may accompany them to add further support to the child or family.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments **out of school hours where possible**. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Medical appointments and dental appointments should not be made during school hours. Where this is not possible, the school should be notified in advance and students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents must notify the school in advance of a planned medical or dental appointment by calling the attendance line. Only then will the absence be authorised.

The academy recognises the need to support students during and after long term absence of any kind and will:

- Endeavour to provide work for students to be completed off site where appropriate and medical evidence has been received
- Consider all strategies in partnership with external agencies to encourage the return of students to school
- Ensure there is a positive atmosphere within school in which students are welcomed back.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in reintegration programmes

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The Academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical appointments
- Genuine illness unless your child has been classed as having Persistent Absence
- A medical appointment that could not be made outside of school hours
- Being in the hospital or having hospital treatment
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Attending an interview for a job or a place at a college
- Taking part in an off-site examination
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and 13 circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Exceptional circumstances

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)

- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

The Principal will not authorise absence for any of the following reasons:

- Term-time holidays (including visiting family abroad)
- Study leave
- Trivial illness / needing to take medication/feeling unwell
- Looking after the house or waiting for workmen/deliveries etc.
- Looking after siblings, including dropping them off at school/nursery
- Helping with housework or a family business
- Being unhappy or not getting on with others at school
- Being up late the night before

This is not an exhaustive list and decisions are made at the discretion of the Principal.

Application for Leave of Absence

Parents have a legal responsibility in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education by regular attendance at school. The Department for Education guidance states that holidays and other leave of absence should not be taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are a matter of discretion of the Principal. All cases will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Applications for absence must be made in writing at least two weeks before the intended leave. Supporting evidence should be provided at the time of the request.

We define ‘**exceptional circumstances**’ as a family emergency that cannot be helped. **A Family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.** The Principal will not authorise school absence purely for the reason of a family holiday.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the Academy, the absence will be marked unauthorised. We may consider referring to the Education Legal Intervention team, who are responsible for issuing penalty notices to and prosecutions. Where a student is persistently absent, or where there the leave of absence will make them persistently absent, leave of absence will not be granted.

Where a child fails to return to the Academy after an agreed leave of absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. The unauthorised absence will be managed in accordance with the statutory guidance.

Religious Observance

We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance falls during school time, the absence from the Academy will be authorised. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and a parent applies for more than one day, the Academy may only record one day using this code, as set out in the statutory guidance.

Children missing from education (CME)

Students will only be deleted from the register in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended in the 2016 Student Registration regulations. Joseph Leckie Academy will follow Walsall Council’s Children Missing Education Protocol when a student’s whereabouts is unknown. It

is important that if families decide to send their child/children to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from our academy roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The student's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. Failing to notify Joseph Leckie Academy will result in a referral to Walsall Council's Children Missing Education Service.

If a child has been continuously absent from school for 20 days or more, for no authorised reason, the child can be removed from the admission register, but only when the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. They may also be removed from roll, if they have succeeded in finding the child but agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe the student will attend again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take to secure the student's attendance. These procedures are set out in the Education Regulations.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This information is easily available whenever the parent wants to look via Arbor (if parents have forgotten log-in details they should contact the school).

School will also issue half-termly written attendance reports which show parents/carers what their child's attendance has been like for that half-term.

We report to parents and communicate strategies with staff using percentage attendance and track the cumulative changes to this:

	Days missed at 98%	Days missed at 95%	Days missed at 93%	Days missed at 90%
Half term 1	0.5 days	2 days	3 days	3 days
Half term 2	1.5 days	4 days	6 days	8 days
Half term 3	2 days	5 days	8 days	10 days
Half term 4	2.5 days	6 days	10 days	14 days
Half term 5	3 days	8 days	12 days	17 days
Half term 6	4 days	10 days	15 days	21 days

Attendance monitoring

- The attendance officers monitor student absence on a daily basis.
- If a student's absence shows patterns of absence which are unusual or includes unauthorised absences we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- If strategies are insufficiently successful in improving attendance, a referral will be made to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service and may result in the issue of a formal warning notice. Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

We compare our attendance data to the national average, local average. The academy tracks the attendance of individual students to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. We use this information to identify any children who may be in need of intervention and support. Patterns of attendance and the impact of strategies to improve attendance are monitored internally by the Attendance Champion.

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. The Academy has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

The underlying school level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Academy strategy for addressing Persistent and Severe Absenteeism

To prevent a child's attendance falling below 90% the academy has a range of support strategies in order to re-engage our young people with their learning. This will include seeking student voice, working together with families to overcome barriers, and seeking support from wider services. If the academy is unable to successfully engage with families and unexplained absence continues, support will be formalised in conjunction with the Local Authority.

Legal Sanctions

Joseph Leckie Academy will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first penalty notice**, the parent must pay **£80 within 21 days**, or **£160 within 28 days**.

If a **second penalty notice** is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay **£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 the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day).

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a **notice to improve** to give parents a **final chance to engage** with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school. They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 2 and 4 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Recognising good attendance and punctuality

Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and students. The school treats students and parents with dignity and uses a positive approach to attendance; recognising that this helps to challenge parents' misconceptions about what good attendance looks like. Joseph Leckie Academy also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

School Attendance is promoted in several ways:

- Listen to and understand students' and parents/carers' concerns about potential barriers to attendance;
- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of barriers beyond the school's control;
- Utilise the escalation of support processes for students at risk of becoming severely or persistently absent;
- Conduct home visits where there are concerns about attendance for vulnerable students as a means to support improving their attendance;
- HSLO weekly visits to those flagged as Persistent or Severe Attendance (Access Early Help when appropriate)
- Communicate the importance of good attendance to all students, parents/carers and staff
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance and share the weekly attendance by year group in Pastoral Power points / notice boards / posters around the school (which are being implemented over 2024-2025)

Attendance Rewards

School Attendance is promoted in several ways:

- Praise from Form Tutors and class teachers every day for good attendance
- Certificates for 100% attendance and most improved attendance.
- Form breakfasts for highest or most improved attendance per Half Term
- Termly '100%' attendance and punctuality prize draw per year group in assembly.
- The year group with the highest attendance for that week are updated on the weekly Pastoral Power points.
- Displays located around the school promoting excellent attendance and the skills lost when students do not attend school
- Letters to parents of those students who have improved their attendance over a certain period of time.
- One to one praise for the most challenging students from the Attendance Office, Pastoral Lead, Attendance Lead and SLT.
- Raffle draws for excellent attendance
- Postcards to parents for attendance
- House attendance which promotes competition between all 4 houses to improve attendance
- Attendance monitoring through an attendance tracker. This is updated weekly using attendance data. Students are tracked by Form Tutor, Pastoral teams and SLT links.

Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Culture of Inclusivity and support

Where a student has a medical condition (physical or mental health related), a disability, a special educational need or indeed any other factor which may present a barrier to attendance, we uphold our aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying issue which is causing concern. We endeavour to work with these students and their families, taking into account their individual needs, in order to make reasonable and supportive adjustments to facilitate high attendance:

- Class teachers discuss catching up missed work with student
- Altered curriculum where appropriate

- Altered school day (start/end of day or altered break/lunch). This must be temporary and phased out in a timely manner.
- SENCO observation to identify potential unmet need if appropriate
- Barriers to attendance meeting with the student, parents/carers, Attendance champion and member of the pastoral team
- Family First Support to be offered to families (must be offered to all children who are persistently absent).

Addressing Poor attendance and punctuality

At Joseph Leckie Academy we work diligently to help students attend well. We will communicate regularly with parents and always provide support to overcome barriers to good attendance. We address poor attendance through our graduated response.

The Academy will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the students or groups of students who need it most. In doing so, the Academy, led by the Senior Attendance Champion, will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify students at risk of poor attendance
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, form tutors and relevant leaders
- Identify students who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- Benchmark Academy attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- Monitor the impact of Academy strategies and actions to improve the attendance of particular students and particular groups
- Work with the Local Authority and other local partners to identify key groups of students
- Hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of students who the Academy and/or Local Authority considered to be vulnerable
- Will communicate patterns of absence to appropriate agencies for students with a social worker or under the care of the Virtual School.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Vice Principal for Behaviour and Attendance and Assistant Principal Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Children missing from education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their schools or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024).

Information and sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to Government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

Record keeping and confidentiality.

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the Academy's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The Academy's use of this procedure data will be on its website which explains how the Academy will use personal data.