

Attendance Policy

2024 -2025

Joseph Leckie Academy

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 good attendance, including:

- Promoting good 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.

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, 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.

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Legislation and Guidance

This policy 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:

- 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

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

- Children missing education
- Supporting children with medical conditions in school
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school

- Suspensions and exclusions
- Alternative provision
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Birmingham Elective Home Education (EHE) guidance

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 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.

2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Regular attendance at school is key to student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the Academy is dedicated to ensuring its Attendance Policy is adhered to as much as possible. Joseph Leckie Academy takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, students and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be.

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 to:

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, EHA (early help) or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support: Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, 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, 2024), 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- 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.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- 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
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the Head Teacher and Deputy Principle for Behaviour and Attendance to account for the implementation of this policy.

4. The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

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:

- Setting a clear vision for attendance; Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence
- Maintaining a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress on attendance, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Ensuring all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance
- Appropriately resourcing for attendance support.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes/ maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- 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

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

5. The Attendance Intervention Officer and Attendance officer

The school attendance intervention and attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to attendance Lead / Pastoral Teams and school staff and reporting concerns
- Working with the local authority and other key stakeholders to tackle persistent and severe absence
- Working with education welfare officers (EWO) on a weekly basis, to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head Teacher/ Attendance Lead when to issue fixed-penalty notices

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@josephleackieacademy.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@josephleackieacademy.co.uk

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

6. 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 10 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 2024), 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.

7. The Attendance team will:

- Take calls from parents/carers and Sixth form students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers and Sixth form students to the Heads of Year or Key Stage Hubs where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

8. 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 pupils, 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.

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.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day
- Provide the school with 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Call the school to report their child's absence before **8.30am** on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, **and advise when they are expected to return**
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting either the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Principle or Attendance Team, who can be contacted via the school telephone number: 01922 721071
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- **Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.**

9. Student Expectations

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that you will:

- Attend school every day on time (with Form Tutor by 8.30am)

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- be aware of the Academy's attendance rules, and when you are required to attend. This will be communicated to you through school staff, parents/carers and the school timetable
- speak to your Form Tutor (or any member of staff including the Pastoral and Safeguarding team) if you are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on your attendance
- follow the process for registering if you arrive late (see information below).

You are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by your Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Attendance Officer, DSL/Head of Sixth form, Teaching staff, SLT and Head Teacher. This will help the Academy to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for your individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation

10. Recording Attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session in the afternoon. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
 - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
 - Absent
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
 - Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- (See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes).

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day

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

- Pupils must arrive in school by **8.25am** each school day and gates will close at **8.28am**.
- The register for the **first session (AM)** will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am
- Students who **arrive after 9.00am** will receive a **CODE U**
- The register for the **second session (PM)** will be taken at **12.20pm (Years 8 and 10) and 3.00pm (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.

Day to day processes

Parents/guardians communicate via school communication: school number **01922 721071** before **8.30 am** if their child is absent.

The Attendance Officer/Attendance team are responsible for ensuring registers are updated accordingly.

- **First Day calling for the N coded students.** (Vulnerable students are called first: Pupil Premium, SEND) and those with a social worker, family social worker will be contacted on the first day of their absence by the DSL's (Mrs M DeRome and Mrs McCullough).
- The Attendance Officer **identifies trends** and pupils who have had **three consecutive days** of absence. (This should trigger a **4th day Home Visit**, with the 'Step together team' and if available, members of the Pastoral Team).
- **Medical evidence** is requested and a letter via email relaying attendance concerns.
- For PM registration, the Attendance team ensures that all teachers complete registers in a prompt manner.
 - Weekly updates by the Senior Attendance Champion are shared with attendance, Pastoral and SLT teams highlighting significant figures.

Further procedures

- The Attendance Officer is responsible for ensuring **registers are coded correctly.**
- Any students who are **dual registered or attending alternative provision** have daily attendance shared with the school;
- All students in school are on a register for all periods of the day for lesson by lesson attendance monitoring (this includes students in AIP, A2E, A7 or the KS3/4 hubs).
- **Pastoral Board meetings** share attendance updates with all year groups. Meetings highlight those pupils at risk of becoming Persistently/ Severely Absent.
- If concern persists, **The Early Help** provision is explored via the Safeguarding team and EWO
- Meetings with Parents/ carer are arranged if there is a persistent concern around attendance.
- **Walsall toolkit** is also utilised to support SEMH, financial support for bus passes, soft-start to the school day, in rare occasions part time timetables (reviewed fortnightly) and medical support.

Lateness and Punctuality

A Student who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The academy day starts at 8.30am. All students should be in their form room at this time.

• **Morning registers are marked by 8.40am** (within 10 minutes of form starting).

• Anyone who arrives in school after 9:00am will be marked with a '**U**' **code**, this is an unauthorised absence and could lead to a referral being made.

• Students arriving at school after 8:30am will be spoken to by the Senior Attendance lead at the gate to establish the reason for their lateness. Students will sign in at the Inventory so that their time is recorded and used for internal sanctions.

• Once signed in at reception with Inventory, students will go straight to form. Anyone late after 9.00am will sign in at the main reception and will be given a late slip by reception.

• Punctuality is recorded by form tutors, teachers and the Attendance Officer. Those arriving before 9am receive an L mark. Those arriving post 9am will receive a U mark.

Students who arrive late after 8.28am will receive a 30-minute detention after school on the same day.

11. Unplanned absence

The students 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.

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.

12. Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil'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 pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. **Go to section 14** to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

13. 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 police.
- 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 (see section 15 below), as appropriate

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.

14. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for. We **define 'exceptional circumstances'** as a family emergency that cannot be helped. **A Family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.** The Head Teacher cannot and will not authorise school (or other educational establishment) absence purely for the reason of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the student's year team.

The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

- Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):
- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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)

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

15. 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 Head Teacher (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). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, **the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120**.

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
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>
- 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 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

16. Strategies for promoting attendance

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; EWO 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 (Bronze, Silver and Gold over the year) and most improved attendance.
- Form breakfasts for highest or most improved attendance per Half Term (implemented Autumn Term 2)
- '100%' attendance and punctuality weeks with a prize draw per year group in assembly. Identified from 2024-25 data as Week before October Half Term, Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays.
- 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.

17. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- Motivational meeting with the Head of Year Leader
- Parent/carers meetings with Attendance Lead and wider Pastoral Team

- Barriers to attendance identified and action plan put into place.
- Referral to external agency as needed (Early Help – with the voice of the child included)
- Internal target setting
- Medical evidence required for future absences
- Parent Attendance contract to be discussed and signed at Attendance meeting
- Altered school day (start/end of day or altered break/lunch). This must be temporary and phased out in a timely manner. Altered Timetables are shared with Walsall Education Team.
- Advice taken from the Local Authority on how to support both school and the family of the child.
- If necessary, a referral to the Local Authority for irregular attendance to be made as a last resort of all options.

18. Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- 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. Discussion about student in fortnightly SEN/Pastoral meeting.
- Barriers to attendance meeting with the student, Attendance Officer, Attendance Lead, DSL and member of the pastoral team
- Signpost students to self-help resources
- Parenting support to be offered
- Breakfast club to be offered to support lateness and support school readiness
- AM/PM registration check in with Pastoral Team members / LSA's
- Early Help to be offered to families (must be offered to all children who are persistently absent)
- Educational Psychologist referral / ASD referral if applicable
- Mental health referral / Refer to CAMHS if applicable / Refer to social care if applicable / Virtual School
- EHCP referral (where appropriate) or review
- Refer to other appropriate agencies as needed
- Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

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

- 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 Lead and member of the pastoral team
- Early Help to be offered to families (must be offered to all children who are persistently absent)

20. Attendance monitoring

- Weekly attendance meetings are held with the SLT Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer and EWO to identify attendance trends and what strategy is best to tackle the issue – particularly Persistent and Severe Absence. EWO directed to conduct home visits
- Once a student's attendance drops between 96 – 95%, an attendance letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance. Form Tutor will have a conversation with the student to ascertain as to why their attendance is declining.
- If there is no improvement and attendance continues to decline below 95% parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance meeting with the student's HOY and AHOY. A letter of what was discussed, and the outcome of the meeting will then be sent to the parents/carers.
- If then a student's attendance continues to decline (falls under 90%), then the Attendance Officer will start to gather evidence for the Local Authority to take further action. Another meeting will be held and Early Help may be offered at this point and a member of the LA may be invited in to attend the meeting also. The student will be placed on a 10 Day Check-In Tracker with the Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer.
- Attendance Lead to meet with PA students for monitoring to discuss barriers for attending school and organise suitable interventions (with HOY and SLT Links).

Monitoring attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- 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.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

21. Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Use attendance data to complete attendance trackers so students are always aware of their overall attendance percentage and take responsibility to improve it.

22. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the Academy's strategy for improving attendance.

The Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 15 above)
- Place parent/carers on an Attendance Contract
- Attendance meetings/letters to be sent to parents/carers to make them aware of child's attendance and what the next steps will be if it continues to decline.
- Attendance Lead to meet with Year Teams every fortnight to identify students who are at risk of becoming PA and put strategies in place to avoid this happening.
- Attendance Officer to liaise with DSL and DDSL to discuss vulnerable students and identify what support can be offered.
- Attendance letters to be sent when attendance begins to decline (once a student drops under 96%)
- Parents/Carers invited to an attendance meeting to discuss the decline in student's attendance and see what support can be offered.
- Attendance/ Pastoral Teams to meet with Persistent Absence students for attendance monitoring meetings to discuss barriers for attending school and suitable intervention.

23. 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 Principle for Behaviour and Attendance and Assistant Principal Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

24. 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 school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024).

Attendance Coding at Joseph Leckie Academy

What is it?

Attendance codes are the national attendance and absence codes that must be entered for every student both of compulsory school age and non-compulsory school age and who are listed on the admissions register. They are set out in the latest version of **"Working Together to Improve School Attendance"** which can be found here:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Why are Attendance codes so important?

Attendance codes are important because they enable several important functions to happen in our Academy:

Safeguarding

- Specific register codes indicate when the Academy retains safeguarding oversight for the child.

Legal Compliance

- Attendance codes and the correct use of them, is a legal requirement, to safeguard students and comply with the DFE regulations and data collection for statistics. Data collection enable *“schools, local authorities, the DFE and wider government to gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level and reasons for absence”*.

Identifying Issues and Concerns

- Analysing attendance data from codes, can enable our Academy to identify students who may be struggling with their attendance. In addition, it may give some insight on how a support plan could be drawn up and implemented, to improve their attendance and overall school experience.

Supporting Academic Progress

- Regular attendance to the Academy is imperative to academic performance. Good attendance will enhance academic attainment and performance. Attendance is a crucial factor for success.

Tracking Attendance Patterns

- Attendance codes help our Academy to track and monitor students' daily attendance, providing a clear picture (when used correctly) of a student's presence or absence. Tracking enables key staff to identify any anomalies or patterns that may occur. This enables the appropriate intervention to be utilised, providing a clear guidance to the attendance strategy and student support, to improve their attendance.

Communication

- Correct coding facilitates meaningful communication with families, colleagues and agencies that do support and can support a student, to have improved attendance.

Guidance on the codes and how they work

The following codes and guidance for their use, came into effect from **19th August 2024**. Attendance codes should be input by designated / key members of staff. All staff should have clarity on the codes that they can administer. Correct registration helps to safeguard students.

Key

Reg= Registering staff (Form Tutors, Teachers, Attendance officers)

Admin = Administration staff – those staff that have been trained in the use of attendance codes

Code	Reasons	Who can input?	Notes
Students physically attending your setting			
/ \	Present at the school	Reg	/ = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Reg	Pupil arrives late before register has closed Within 30 minutes of the school day starting (only used when registers are officially 'open') 8.30am – 9.00am
Approved Educational Activity			
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Admin	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority NB: The nature of the provision must also be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision. <i>(i.e. day 6 following PEX, section 19 provision, AP commissioned by the LA through an EHCP)</i>
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Admin	NB: this must be supervised by at least one member of staff from the setting and must have been arranged by (or on behalf of) the school The student is attending a place, other than the school, or any other school at which they are a registered student, for an educational visit or trip The visit or trip must be arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Code V can only be used if the student is present at the visit.
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Admin	NB: the school must have approved the child's attendance at the activity and, by using this code is confirming that the activity is being supervised by a person that the school deems to be appropriately trained and qualified for the educational purpose of this activity – seek advice from the sport's national governing body if there are concerns. School must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the child whilst participating.
W	Attending work experience	Admin	NB: this code cannot be used if the work experience is at the child's own school, or a section 19 provision used for the child. Attendance must be monitored. Note no minimum age.

B	Attending any other approved educational activity Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience	Admin	NB: cannot be used if a child is dual registered (see D code); must be educational in nature; all due diligence must have been completed; attendance must be planned and approved; safeguarding arrangements must be in place . This code to be used for taster days at other schools (or universities), courses at local colleges, unregistered AP arranged by the school (NOT that which has been arranged by the LA = see K code). Note this cannot be used where a child is accessing remote education – however, keep a record of engagement with remote education. This code is used for students who are guest enrolled elsewhere.
Absent – Leave of absence (authorised)			
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Admin	NB: where an LA licence specifies dates, the school should record these dates as though they are applied for and granted – there is no need for a separate leave of absence request to the school. Where there are no specified dates, the school should receive a leave of absence request.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Admin	NB: Remind parents about trying to make appointments outside of school time (note that those who leave after they have registered, even moments later, are not recorded as absent). If they do not attend registration or arrive within registration period, the M code can't be changed to a L code.
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Admin	E.g.: interview for: Post-16 placement / University/ Apprenticeship/ interview for new educational placement. Agreements for this must be made in advance.
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Admin	NB: those who are looked after (CIC) or who have EHCPs should not routinely be offered study leave.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable	Admin	NB: This should be in: Exceptional circumstances only. <i>These cannot be implemented for reasons linked to behaviour.</i> The Academy will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. Reduced/ Part time timetables must be temporary and agreed in advance with all stakeholders.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Admin	NB: Granted entirely at the school's discretion – can always discuss with the central team for further advice. Must be requested in advance, not retrospectively. Typically, a holiday will not be authorised as exceptional circumstances. Flexi schooling planned home learning days are coded with this code. Maternity leave is granted with this code (there is no statutory timeframe for school aged mothers). The guidance does not reference paternity leave; however, this code would also be used in this

			instance as a 'best fit'. Online educational provision should be coded with a C Code.
Absent – other authorised reasons (not leaves of absence)			
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Admin	NB: shouldn't unnecessarily request proof that travel is for occupational purposes – only where there is reasonable doubt. To support educational continuity, there is an expectation that children who travel with their parents should be dual registered at a school in the area to which the occupational travel has taken the family; any such attendance would be coded accordingly using code D.
R	Religious observance	Admin	NB: only one day can be set aside for the use of code R – any further days must be requested as leaves of absence and, if authorised a code C must be used (at school's discretion).
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Admin	E.g. unable to attend for physical or mental health related reasons – not appointments though. Most parents' notifications will be accepted without question. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt should evidence be requested to support the absence. A conversation with parents may be sufficient to provide the evidence – it may be that other means are required.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Admin	NB: where alternative provision is made by the school, the appropriate code must be used. E is only to be used where the child is excluded with no provision in place. Typically, code B or code D may be used in lieu of code E for children who have been suspended or permanently excluded with provision in place, this does not apply to remote learning.
Absent – unauthorised absence			
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Admin	NB: leave cannot be granted retrospectively, even if a family presents mitigations after the holiday.
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reg	NB: this code must not remain on the record for more than 5 days after the session for which it is used. Seek reasons for absence as a matter of urgency. If a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the student's record to Code O.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Admin	E.g. no reason provided, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that should be recorded using an authorised absence code.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Admin	NB: arrived 31 minutes or more after registers opened. Where a student has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a student will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.

Not a possible attendance			
D	Dual registered at another school	Admin	NB: Used where a child is in attendance at a setting where they are also registered (i.e. a PRU, hospital school, managed move). Code D to be used for all sessions where attendance is expected at the alternative setting (all absences must be documented and followed up, but not recorded on the main roll register).
X	Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school	Admin	E.g. Children in nursery and those in sixth form who are not required to have full time attendance. Where attendance is expected (i.e. timetabled), appropriate absence codes to be used. Times and days of attendance are to be clear to the parent with whom the child normally lives.
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Admin	NB: this code can only be used where travel is arranged by the LA through EHCP setting choices and it is not available (School Attendance: Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 10 (12&13). It is not for any other sort of access arrangement deficit.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Admin	NB: where the LA provides transport because of financial hardship or distance from the family home (not SEN related transport).
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Admin	NB: where a local, national or international emergency has had an impact on travel (E.g. incident on the motorway, cancelled flights, no public transport owing to strikes – to be used only if child lives at least 2/3 miles from school, age dependent).
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Admin	E.g. flooding in part of the school site leads to a partial closure of the school; building projects close part of the building. This can be planned because of building works, or known about the previous evening, e.g. a gas leak and could close the whole site.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Admin	NB: this is to be used where closures are unexpected, i.e. adverse weather conditions. This must be marked during the session in question.
Y5	Unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention	Admin	NB: for children either remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing – or in police detention – or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Admin	NB: This refers to public health outbreaks – not 2 days of absence following a bout of sickness.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Admin	NB: This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the student from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the student, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the student at school does not, in itself, mean the student has been prevented by unavoidable cause.

			Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6)).
Administrative Codes			
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Admin	
#	Planned whole school closure	Admin	NB: known and planned in advance – days between terms; half-terms; bank holidays; up to 5 INSET days; closure of the whole school to be used as a polling station.

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