

15<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

## ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

**ABSENCE LINE**                    **01672 515081** opt 1 y7-y11 opt 2 6<sup>th</sup> form  
**ATTENDANCE EMAIL**        [attendance@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:attendance@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk)

As a school we recognise there are many factors that may arise which can affect your child's attendance. Our aim is to work in partnership with students and parent/carers to attain uninterrupted and consistent attendance which will dramatically help your child's ability to achieve all they are capable of in the time they are here at St John's.

The Law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education. Parents have a **LEGAL DUTY** to ensure their child attends regularly. This means children must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

### OUR AIM

The Aim at St John's is for each student to maintain an excellent attendance of

- **95%** or higher (we aim for higher)
- **94%** is considered as weak attendance and we will be concerned
- **90%** is considered as poor attendance and is regarded by the DFE as persistent absence
- **89%** means that we have serious concerns about your child's attendance and their ability to make progress

**Students with only 90% attendance a year means that they have been absent the equivalent of ½ DAY EACH WEEK or FOUR WHOLE WEEKS of lessons per year.**

### TYPES OF ABSENCE

Each absence is classed as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. For an absence to be authorised a satisfactory reason must be given. These may include illness or medical appointments or exceptional circumstances which will be considered on an individual basis after filling in a leave of absence request form. For full details please see our Attendance policy, which can be found on the school website.

### UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include

- Shopping
- Having a haircut
- Birthdays (pupil or family member)
- Day trips
- Parents work commitments or business trips
- Holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- Parental illness

### ILLNESS

If your child is UNWELL you must call the absence line by **8.30am** on **EACH DAY** of absence. If you do not provide a valid reason each day, we have a duty of care to contact you so we can be sure of your child's whereabouts as this is part of our safeguarding responsibilities.

Where a child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised, however if there are concerns about the length, frequency, or pattern of absence we will need to discuss this with parents/carers to gain a better understanding of the problems and offer support if needed. Lack of engagement from the parents/carers may ultimately require more formal steps to be taken which could result in fines and legal action.

### **MEDICAL**

Appointments should always be planned for out of school hours, however if this is not possible, we would like at least 48 hours' notice of these appointments either by calling the absence line or emailing the Attendance Support Officer who may ask for evidence of the appointment. This could be in the form of an appointment card, appointment letter, letter from a professional, or other medical information.

### **LATENESS**

Registration closes at **8.50 a.m.** If a student is later than this without previous authorisation or satisfactory explanation, they will be marked as unauthorised lateness. All late arrivals **MUST** sign in at reception.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

It is **NOT** the school or Government's policy to authorise holidays in term time. If you are planning to take your child out of school in term time please fill out an Absence Request [Form](#) which can be found at the bottom of the attendance page on our website. You must include the reason for absence and any supporting documents, at least 10 days prior to the planned absence. These requests will be considered on an individual basis by the Principal to decide if the criteria of exceptional circumstances are met.

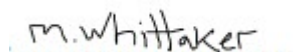
UNAUTHORISED leave of absences will be reported to the Education Welfare Service which we are duty bound to do. This can result in fixed penalty fines being issued which can be very costly.

Any **6<sup>th</sup> Form** leave of absence requests should be directed to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form team via email on [sixthformabsence@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:sixthformabsence@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk)

### **OUR DUTY OF CARE IN RESPONDING TO UNAUTHORISED AND PERSISTANT ABSENCE - POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES**

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Welfare Service) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g., by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £120 per pupil per parent if paid within 28 days. The penalty is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the Education Welfare Service may prosecute parents in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £1,000 per parent per child. Of course, no one wants this to happen, but we need to be very clear about the issue.

Yours Sincerely

  
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**Mr M Whittaker**  
**Vice Principal**



**Mrs S Flippence**  
**Attendance Support Officer**