

JKHS ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY March 2024

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Statement of Intent.

John Kyrle High School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students and we actively promote 100% attendance for all our students because sustained regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

At JKHS excellent attendance is built on four pillars: Recognition, Data, Relationships and Teamwork.

1. Recognising and rewarding excellent attendance aligns with our basic principles of celebrating success.
2. By using high quality data we can support students and families and target our work towards those who need it most.
3. By building strong relationships with students and families we can lay a foundation on which excellent attendance can be built.
4. By working together as a team we will be able to support students to attend every day and access every lesson.

Guiding Principles

- John Kyrle High School recognises that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day (section 444 Education Act 1996).
- The school emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- John Kyrle High School aims to ensure that all its students access an education which meets their needs and allows them to realise their potential.
- The school will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- The school will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.
- The school will challenge those students and their parents/carers that give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The school has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- The school will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage excellent attendance and learning.
- The school will have regard to the Equality Act and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

School Attendance Targets

JKHS is an inclusive school, and we aim for all students to attend every day the school is open to them. As such we strive to achieve 100% attendance for all students.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. A 'parent' is defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as, *'including all natural parents, including those who are not married; any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has care of a child'*. In this policy the terms 'parent' and 'carer' are used interchangeably and without prejudice.

Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts students at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding priority so that all parties know that your child is safe. Parents should update the school every day that the student is absent. The only exception to this will be long-term illnesses or in-patient care where a medical letter indicates the period of absence.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their son or daughter arrives at school by 8.45am.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments are made outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, we request the student is **only absent for the duration of the appointment**. We reserve the right to request written confirmation of the appointment from the medical provider to authorise the absence.

Informing the School of Absences

Parents/carers must contact the school by 9.30am to report any absences, or to inform us if their child is leaving school for a medical appointment. To do this they should:

- Call the student absence line on 01989 760395 or email studentabsence@jkhs.org.uk with your child's full name and reason for absence.

Please do not leave messages elsewhere in school

Parents/carers must ensure the school is provided with up-to-date contact details (to include telephone numbers and email addresses and at least one other emergency contact number).

The Role of JKHS Staff

At John Kyrle High School Teamwork is one of the JKHS pillars of good attendance. There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibilities.

- The Senior Attendance Officer (Deputy Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team) has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues, co-ordinating intervention whether this is by meetings or advising parents termly of Persistent Absence.
- The Attendance Officer manages the day-to-day operation of the School's attendance policy, liaising closely with the Senior Attendance Officer, Senior Leaders and the Heads of Year. They are also the principal point of contact for students and families where there are attendance concerns

and they manage and share high quality and timely data which serves to support the School's actions.

- Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Officers monitor patterns of attendance and liaise with Tutors, the Attendance Team and the Attendance Officer to develop a picture of attendance that includes pastoral knowledge and brings together academic, pastoral and attendance information.
- Tutors monitor day to day attendance using data provided by the Attendance Officer as well as their knowledge of individual students. Their focus is on rewarding good attendance, supporting students whose attendance is not 100% and contacting families where there are initial concerns.
- Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of all lessons. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark students present, absent or late.
- Administration Assistants ensure that:
 - Attendance and lateness records are up to date
 - If no reason for absence has been provided, parents/carers/contact points are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call/ text or email.
 - Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence
 - The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (in line with National Attendance Codes)

Illness

In many cases students can attend school when they have mild symptoms of illness. Parents should refer to the excellent NHS Guidance document "Is My Child Too Ill For School" ([Is my child too ill for school?](#)).

When a student is not well enough to attend then parents/carers should notify school on the first day and every day thereafter, if their child is unable to attend due to illness. We will authorise absences due to illness unless we have cause for concern about whether the illness is genuine. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, we may request parents/carers to provide medical evidence. This may take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or a doctor's note.

We can record the absence as unauthorised if we are not satisfied by the authenticity of the illness and we will advise parents/carers of our intention (verbally, via email or by letter).

When we are satisfied that a student is too ill to attend school and the absence is authorised, please note, schoolwork will not be sent home. The student should concentrate on recovering and returning to school.

Persistent illness without medical evidence will not be authorised and may be reported to Herefordshire Council, who may take legal action.

Authorising Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

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

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

These are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Senior Leader will liaise with the Attendance Officer, on behalf of the Headteacher, to ensure a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Senior Leader, on behalf of the Headteacher, is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

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

The Senior Leader, acting on behalf of the Headteacher, may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher. All requests for exceptional leave of absence must be made at least 10 working days prior to the first day of the proposed absence and should be submitted using the Leave of Absence request form (available on the school website). Such requests will be considered by the Senior Leader in consultation with the Pastoral Team who will make a recommendation to the Senior Attendance Officer (acting on behalf of the Headteacher) for final approval and recording on the pastoral log. Each case will be judged on its merits and the Senior Leader's decision is final and doesn't represent a precedent. If the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Local Authority for potential legal action (see Penalty Notices below).

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will **not** be authorised, but this list should not be seen as exhaustive or exclusive:

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

The following are examples of exceptional circumstances that **may** result in absence being authorised:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family, for a limited duration.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.
- Students representing their county or country for sporting events or their chosen fields of excellence.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive and are non-binding

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

Stages of School Action for Low Attendance

We operate a phased approach to absences where contact and support is offered to parents and students. There are two triggers to this support. The first trigger is weekly monitoring of attendance and early support based on patterns of attendance, this leads to attendance being monitored more closely along with families and students supported to build attendance. The second trigger is average attendance, with the procedure in this second circumstance being outlined below:

- 95 - 100% attendance – absences are investigated by tutors who notify Head of Year & attendance officer of concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored by Attendance Officer. This may include meetings with students, formal correspondence, meetings with parents and attendance contracts. At this stage Fixed Penalty Notices or Early Help referrals to external agencies may be triggered..
- Below 90% attendance (Persistent Absenteeism) is recorded and focused intervention and monitoring are begun.
 - Where the level of absence has not improved and there continue are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority and engage with other agencies to offer support and monitor the safety of the student.
 - For cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.
- 10 unauthorised absences (O) or 10 late marks after registers have closed (coded U) within 13 weeks (approximately 1 full term) are likely to result in a referral to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued ([School attendance and absences – Herefordshire Council](#))

Supporting Students to Return to School

In almost all cases when students have been absent from school they will feel confident to return straight into their normal routine, supported by their tutor. However, some students may require additional support to return to the routine of the school day. PSOs, supported by HOYs, are able to offer a range of different types of bespoke support for these students, which is put into place on a case-by-case basis.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are **not** registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. In line with this risk, no child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the relevant Student Referral Unit (PRU) or Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

Where students **are** registered with JKHS but there are concerns that the young person is at risk for becoming CME then a referral will be made to the Local Authority.

Triggers for a CME concern are:

- A child has missed ten school days or more without permission
- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (student file) has been requested by another school.

Rewarding Attendance

At John Kyrle High School we believe it is important to reward students with excellent attendance.

The following is guidance for Tutors and Heads of Year:

Rewarding 100% Attendance

- Weekly – tutors reward students with 100% attendance with Achievement Points via ClassCharts.
- Half-termly: Heads of Year reward students with 100% attendance via ClassCharts and postcards home.
- Termly: The Headteacher rewards students with 100% attendance via ClassCharts and postcards home.
- Yearly: The Chair of Governors rewards students with 100% attendance

Rewarding Improved Attendance

- To reward students who have improved attendance specific rewards will be given to students whose average attendance has improved from one half term to the next (the threshold for meeting these rewards will be decided by Heads of Year and/or Senior Leaders)
- Students who have been identified for support but whose attendance improves and who have 100% attendance for 6 weeks (60 consecutive sessions) will be rewarded with Achievement Points via ClassCharts, a Headteachers letter and a specific 'Attendance Reward Trip'.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Lateness to school is a serious matter at John Kyrle High School and therefore a strict policy is in place to ensure prompt attendance to school. The school day starts at 8.45 am and all students are expected to

present in class by that time. Notifiable lateness is defined as arriving at school after registers have closed at 9.15 am when a 'U' code will be recorded and deemed to have been present for the whole session.

Students are recorded late at the school office at am registration and must provide a reason. This information is collated by the Attendance Team. If a student is late to school three times without good reason in one week, the Head of Year will write to parents of the student and behaviour sanctions (break and lunchtime detentions may be applied) or alternatively the student will be placed on a punctuality card that we request parents/carers to sign (or approve online) daily.

If a student reaches six late arrivals (after registers have closed) without good reason the Head of Year will write a second letter to parents of the student indicating that if a student reaches ten late arrivals then a final warning letter will be issued. 10 late arrivals also triggers a referral to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Herefordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices for Child Absenteeism.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances such as:

- Parents' continued failure to engage or respond to the school's attempts to contact them, or where parents continually fail to provide an explanation for a student's absence in accordance with the school's procedures.
- Holiday during term-time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 13-week period.
- Persistent (i.e. 10 or more) late arrivals at school after the registers have closed.
- A student who has been excluded is found in a public place within the first 5 days of any exclusion.

Other than in specific circumstances a penalty notice will only be issued after a written warning has been sent. A warning letter that a penalty notice may be issued should be sent when 10 or more sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absences occur in a 26-school week period. Penalty notices may be issued in cases where a further 10 or more sessions (5 or more school days) of unauthorised absence accumulate in a 13 school week period (i.e. a school term).

In the specific circumstance of leave of absence in term time where permission has not been sought or permission refused, or the failure of the child to return after an agreed date, we may request the issue of a penalty notice without sending a penalty notice warning.

It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence and this power is exercised using professional judgement.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the current regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer of

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

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Student Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

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

- With leave (the school has given permission)
- Due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious observance
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

These are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Should a parent or carer wish to request a Leave of Absence for their son/daughter then they should complete the form on the School's website which can be found in the 'Parent' section under 'Attendance'.

Students present at an approved off-site educational activity

An approved educational activity is where a student is taking part in a supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Students can **only** be recorded as receiving an off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6 (4) of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school. The activity must take place for the sessions for which the mark is recorded.

John Kyrle High School is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students educated off-site and measures are taken to ensure students are safeguarded. Arrangements are in place between the school and any providers of alternative activities to notify the school of any student's absence. Any unexplained and unexpected absences are followed up in a timely manner.

Safeguarding

Should contact with a parent/carers not be established and a satisfactory explanation for the absence of a child not be obtained, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with those named on the emergency contact list. If this is unsuccessful a "safe and well" check via the police may be instigated.

If a student has been absent for 4 or more consecutive school days and has not been seen by another professional within this period of time, we may ask parents/carers to bring their child into school to verify they are safe and well. Staff will liaise with other agencies, working with students and their parents/carers

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to support attendance, for example, where a student has a social worker, family support worker or is otherwise vulnerable.

If there are any safeguarding concerns for a young person, a referral to Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or Gloucestershire MASH may be appropriate. The MASH contact number in Herefordshire is 01432 260800 and in Gloucestershire, 01452 426565.

Policy Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- SEND (see our SEND information report and our Early Help Assessment document)

Useful External Links

- [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
- [School attendance and absences – Herefordshire Council](#)
- [Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://blog.gov.uk)

Policy Tracking

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