



ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL
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SBJS Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Authorised by: The Board of Governors of St Benedict's School

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out how St Benedict's Junior School promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality in the Junior School and Nursery.

Regular attendance and prompt arrival support learning, friendship, wellbeing, and a calm start to the day. They help children take full part in the life of the School and benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided. In keeping with the Benedictine principle of Discipline of Daily Practice, we believe that children flourish when their days are shaped by steady routines, clear expectations, and a strong sense of belonging.

Attendance is also a safeguarding matter. Department for Education guidance for independent schools makes clear that failure to follow attendance requirements appropriately is a serious safeguarding issue, because inaccurate or poorly maintained registers reduce a school's ability to know who is on-site, who is missing, and whether a child may be at risk of harm .

This policy has therefore been written to support children, colleagues and families with clear procedures suited to the daily life of the Junior School and Nursery.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all children
- support children to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the School
- set out clear and consistent expectations for families and colleagues
- provide robust Junior School and Nursery procedures for registration and follow-up
- support early identification of attendance patterns that may indicate a pastoral, medical or safeguarding concern
- meet the relevant legal and regulatory requirements for independent schools

3. Statutory and Inspection Framework

This policy has been prepared with reference to the Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Working together to improve school attendance.

The School has regard to Department for Education guidance on attendance and safeguarding. This guidance makes clear that independent schools must maintain accurate admission and attendance registers, have effective day-to-day processes for following up absence, monitor attendance patterns carefully, and recognise that weaknesses in attendance practice may also give rise to safeguarding concerns.

St Benedict's School is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate against the Independent School Standards, including the requirements relating to attendance, safeguarding and the keeping of registers.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children in the Nursery
- All children in the Junior School
- All teaching and support colleagues involved in registration, attendance monitoring and attendance follow up
- Some statutory attendance codes may apply only in limited circumstances or may not normally arise in the Junior School and Nursery.

For the purposes of this policy, the word Parent includes any adult with parental responsibility for a child.

5. Guiding Principles

St Benedict's Junior School will:

- promote a culture in which good attendance is valued and recognised
- work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance
- maintain accurate admission and attendance registers
- follow up absence promptly, carefully and consistently
- treat attendance as a safeguarding priority
- support children whose attendance is affected by health needs, SEND, emotional wellbeing or family circumstances
- respond to lateness and irregular attendance in a calm, fair and proportionate way

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Junior School Head

The Junior School Head:

- has overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality in the Junior School and Nursery
- considers requests for leave of absence during term time
- is informed of serious, repeated or concerning attendance matters

6.2 Attendance Champion

The Attendance Champion (Lana Powell):

- supports the implementation of this policy
- reviews concerns such as truancy, suspicious absences, unaccounted absences, or forged notes
- informs the Junior School Head when appropriate

6.3 Form Tutors

Form Tutors:

- complete morning (8.40am) and afternoon (1.00pm/1.30pm if an Assembly has taken place) registration accurately and on time using SIMS
- report absence and lateness in line with this policy
- pass absence notes to the School Office
- contact parents regarding a first occasion of lateness without valid reason
- remain alert to any attendance pattern that may indicate a need for support or a safeguarding concern

6.4 Subject Specialists and Colleagues Providing Cover

Subject Specialists and colleagues providing cover:

- complete registers when teaching a class immediately after lunch break or when covering for an absent colleague
- follow the same registration procedures as the Form Tutors

6.5 School Office, Reception, and School Nurse

The SBJS Receptionist and the SBJS Nurse, will check that registration details have been successfully updated on SIMS each day.

The SBJS Office will contact parents for information if a child is absent and no note/email or telephone communication has been received.

6.6 Heads of Key Stage

Heads of Key Stage:

- contact parents on the second occasion of lateness within five consecutive working days of the first occasion, where no valid reason has been given
- support early intervention where attendance or punctuality becomes a concern

6.7 All Colleagues

All colleagues must be fully conversant with the registration procedure. Accurate registration is both a statutory requirement and an essential part of the School's safeguarding practice.

The Attendance Champion, supported by the Junior School Head and the Junior School Deputy Head, oversees attendance patterns, reviews emerging concerns and coordinates support where attendance is at

risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Attendance Expectations

Children are expected to attend school regularly and arrive in good time for the start of the day unless they are unwell or there is another valid reason for absence.

Parents are expected to:

- notify the school as early as possible if their child is absent
- give the reason for the absence
- provide advance notice, where possible, of medical appointments or other planned absence
- avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- work constructively with the School where attendance becomes a concern

Where attendance concerns arise, the School will work with families at an early stage to understand any barriers and agree supportive next steps.

8. Reporting Absence

If a child is absent, parents should inform the Junior School as early as possible on the first day of absence and, whenever possible, before morning registration.

- By telephone to the SBJS Office – 020 8862 2050
- By email – jsattendance@stbenedicts.org.uk

If a child is absent and no note/email or telephone communication has been received from the parents, the Form Tutor should inform the SBJS School Office, who will contact the parents for information.

If the reason for absence remains unclear, the School will continue to follow this up in line with its safeguarding procedures.

9. Medical Appointments and Other Planned Absence

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside the school day wherever reasonably possible.

When this is not possible, parents should notify the School in advance and provide the reason for the absence.

The School will not routinely require medical evidence for short absences but may ask for reasonable supporting information when absence is frequent, prolonged, or gives rise to concern.

If a child needs to leave during the school day for an appointment, the parent must notify the School in advance.

10. Leave of Absence during Term Time

Parental requests for any child to be absent from school must be addressed in advance to the Junior School Head.

Each request will be considered individually. Leave of absence is not granted automatically and should be requested only in exceptional circumstances.

Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively.

11. Registration

11.1 Registration Times

Registration takes place in the morning and afternoon each day.

Teachers will ensure that SIMS is updated twice daily:

The PC or tablet in each classroom will be used for this purpose.

Morning registration is taken at 8.40am and afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm, or 1.30pm on Thursday if an assembly has taken place. In line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the register remains open for no more than 30 minutes after the start of the session.

It is a statutory requirement to register all children both in the morning and in the afternoon. This will normally be done by the Form Tutor or Subject Specialist, but from time to time it will be necessary to provide cover for absent colleagues.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be fully conversant with the registration procedure.

11.2 Daily Checking of Registers

The SBJS Receptionist, and the SBJS Nurse, will check that registration details have been successfully updated on the system each day.

If a child is absent and no note/email or telephone communication has been received from the parents, the Form Tutor should inform the SBJS Office, who will contact the parents for information.

11.3 Start of Day Routine

Whilst registration is being completed, the children will be engaged in an Early Bird activity, such as:

- problem solving
- reading

Once registration is completed, the day will begin with a prayer.

11.4 Attendance Codes

The School uses the full range of statutory attendance and absence codes as set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Appendix A provides the codes most likely to be used in the Junior School and Nursery, together with additional statutory codes that may apply in specific circumstances.

The Junior School Office and relevant leaders will oversee the correct use of attendance codes and will update records when further information is received.

12. Absence Notes

- Absence notes should be dated and initialled by the Form Tutor and sent to the School Office.
- The absence note will be added to the child's personal record.
- Communication received in the form of an email must be forwarded immediately to Mira Koleva (SBJs Receptionist) and Donna Burke (SBJs Nurse).
- Any absence, including truancy, suspicious absence, unaccounted absence or forged notes, should be discussed with the Deputy Head, who will in turn inform the Junior School Head.
- Parental requests for any child to be absent from school must be addressed in advance to the Junior School Head.

13. Lateness

Punctuality matters. A late arrival can unsettle a child's start to the day and interrupt learning for the class.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is late if they arrive at 8.40am onwards without a valid reason.

The following should be applied by Form Tutors if children arrive late without a valid reason:

- First occasion - Contact parents for clarification as to why the child was late.
- Second occasion within five consecutive working days of the first occasion - Contact is made by the respective Head of Key Stage.

Where lateness becomes frequent or concerning, the matter will be reviewed by pastoral leaders and may be discussed with parents at a meeting.

In line with DfE guidance, registers remain open for no more than 30 minutes after the start of the session. Children arriving after this time are recorded as absent for that session unless an acceptable reason has been provided. Where an absence is recorded as unexplained in the register, the correct code is entered as soon as the reason is established, and no later than five working days after the session.

14. First-day Response and Follow-up

The School will follow up unexplained absence promptly on the first day.

This will usually include:

- checking whether a note, email, or telephone message has been received
- contacting parents where no explanation has been given
- updating SIMS once the reason for absence is confirmed
- referring any concern about unexplained, suspicious or repeated absence to the Junior School Deputy Head and, when needed, the Junior School Head

The Department for Education guidance expects schools to have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow up absence.

15. Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The School will monitor attendance and punctuality regularly to identify:

- individual children who may need support
- emerging patterns of lateness
- repeated short absences
- wider class or year group concerns

The Department for Education guidance states that schools are expected to monitor and analyse attendance and absence data regularly so that pupils or groups who need support can be identified and helped. Attendance and punctuality information will be reviewed regularly so that individual children, groups, or patterns of concern can be identified promptly and supported appropriately

16. Persistent Absence and Attendance Causing Concern

A child is considered persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their time in school.

Where a child's attendance gives cause for concern, the Junior School will:

- review the pattern carefully
- speak with parents
- consider whether there are barriers linked to health, SEND, emotional wellbeing or family circumstances
- put supportive measures in place
- seek further advice or involve external agencies where appropriate

The School's response will remain supportive, child-centred, and proportionate.

17. Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. The uploaded guidance states that inaccurate admission and attendance registers reduce a school's ability to know who is on-site, who is missing, whether absences are persistent or unusual, and whether a child may be at risk of harm. Where absence gives rise to a safeguarding concern, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed without delay.

Accordingly:

- unexplained absence will always be followed up
- repeated, suspicious, or unusual absence will be considered carefully
- concerns may be referred to safeguarding leaders
- the School will act promptly where a child may be missing education or may be at risk

The School's safeguarding procedures should always be followed where absence raises a welfare concern.

18. Support for Pupils with Additional Needs

Some children may face barriers to attendance linked to:

- medical needs

- special educational needs or disabilities
- emotional wellbeing
- family circumstances

The uploaded guidance states that schools should be particularly mindful of children absent because of mental or physical ill health or SEND and should provide them with additional support.

The Junior School will work with families to understand barriers and support children to attend regularly and successfully.

19. Admission and Attendance Registers

The School maintains an admission register for all children on roll and an attendance register for each morning and afternoon session.

These registers are maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The admission register records all children enrolled at the School. The attendance register records the presence or absence of each child in each school session.

Where any detail in the admission register changes, the School will amend the register as soon as possible. A child's name will be removed from the admission register only where the relevant legal grounds are met.

20. Recording, Retention, and Amendment of Register Data

- Attendance data is recorded electronically on SIMS.
- Admission and attendance registers will be maintained and retained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and other relevant legal requirements.
- Where an entry is amended, the record will retain the original entry and the amended entry in accordance with the requirements of the regulations

21. Communication with Families

The School seeks to work in close partnership with families so that attendance concerns are addressed early and well.

The School will:

- communicate clearly about attendance expectations
- contact parents promptly where absence is unexplained
- discuss concerns with sensitivity and clarity
- support families in removing barriers to attendance where possible

The uploaded guidance states that schools should build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership to remove them.

22. Monitoring, Review and Publication

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a relevant change in law, regulation, or guidance.

The uploaded guidance states that all schools are expected to have a clear attendance policy which staff,

pupils, and parents understand. This policy is made available to parents and prospective parents in accordance with the School's obligations relating to the provision of information.

23. Approval and Review

This policy was approved on behalf of St Benedict's Junior School by:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A1 – Registration Codes Commonly used in the Junior School and Nursery

The School uses the full set of statutory attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The codes below are those most likely to be used in the Junior School and Nursery, together with additional statutory codes that may apply in specific circumstances.

/ Present AM

**** Present PM

L Late arrival before the register is closed (counts as present)

N Absent with no reason yet provided

Absences related to school activities should be recorded as follows:

V Educational Visit

P Approved sporting activity

Where the School receives clear notification from parents, other absences may be recorded as follows:

M Medical or dental appointment

I Illness

R Religious observance

C Other authorised, exceptional circumstances.

The School uses the full set of national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. In addition to the codes above, the following national codes are used where applicable:

U Arrived after the register closed (recorded as unauthorised absence)

B Attending an approved educational activity off-site (not a visit, sporting activity or work experience)

G Holiday not granted by the School (recorded as unauthorised absence)

X Not required to attend – pupil below or above compulsory school age, for sessions they are not timetabled to attend

O Absent in other or unknown circumstances (recorded as unauthorised absence)

Y1–Y7 Unable to attend for reasons outside the family's control – e.g. transport normally provided unavailable (Y1), widespread travel disruption (Y2), part of premises closed (Y3), whole site unexpectedly closed such as adverse weather (Y4), pupil in criminal justice detention (Y5), attendance prevented by public-health guidance or law (Y6), any other unavoidable cause (Y7)

Planned whole-school closure (administrative code)

Appendix A2 – Registration Codes – Statutory Codes Used Only Where Applicable

The School uses the full set of national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. In addition to the codes above, the following national codes are used where applicable:

D Dual registration – Child is attending another school at which they are also registered

K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (e.g. alternative provision or provision in an EHC plan)

C1 Leave of absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad (under a licence or BOPA)

C2 Leave of absence for a child on an agreed temporary part-time timetable

E Suspended or permanently excluded where no alternative provision has yet been arranged

T Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Q Unable to attend because the local authority has not made access or travel arrangements it is required to make

Z Prospective child not yet on the admission register (administrative code)