

Jack & Jill Family of Schools

Attendance Policy

Applies to:

- Jack & Jill Nursery School
- Nightingale House Pre-Preparatory School
- Clarence House Preparatory School

Related Legislation:

- The Education Acts 1996 & 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010

Related Policies and Documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Early Education Entitlement (EEE) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Jack and Jill Family of Schools Terms and Conditions
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Who is this policy for?

- Staff and volunteers
- Parents
- External agencies

Available from:

- School Office
- SharePoint

Monitoring and Review:

To be continuously monitored and reviewed no later than two years from date below.

References:

- “Parents” refers to parents and guardians.
- “Family” refers to the School’s Management Information System.
- “Staff” refers to employees, peripatetic staff, external providers (e.g., Springboard Swimmers).
- The “School” refers to the Jack & Jill Family of Schools (Jack and Jill Nursery School Twickenham, Nightingale House Pre-Preparatory School, and Clarence House Preparatory School).
- “EYFS” refers to The Early Years Foundation Stage which is the curriculum for children from birth to aged 5, including the Reception year group.
- “Strategic Leadership Team” (SLT) refers to the team managing the School, currently including the Deputy Principal, Headteacher of Clarence House, Pre-Preparatory Lead Teacher, Early Years Lead Teachers

Reviewer: Designated Safeguarding Lead (August 2025)

Effective: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Proprietor’s Signature: *Kevin Papinuk*

The Jack & Jill Family of Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all the pupils achieve their potential.

The Jack & Jill Family of Schools promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender, or ability. We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our School.

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the Jack and Jill Family of School's approach to the promotion of high levels of pupil attendance and processes adopted to monitor attendance and manage issues arising from poor attendance or lateness. This policy is a working document designed to promote high attendance levels and ensure families are supported to keep absence from school to a minimum.

At the Jack & Jill Family of Schools all children on roll are expected to attend every day the schools are in session assuming they are fit and healthy to do so. This is a legal requirement for children of compulsory school age and here at the Family of Schools we also expect the same as far as possible from our Nursery children.

In the case of children attending Jack & Jill Nursery School where some or all sessions/hours are funded by Early Education Funding (EFF) full attendance is essential, including during the term time plus weeks which parents choose for their children and are scheduled for 5 weeks beyond the normal school term time. Unacceptable absence levels may result in withdrawal of funding by either the school or AfC (Achieving for Children), who audit the take up of such funding.

We recognise that good attendance begins with our schools being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that our schools are calm, orderly, safe and supportive environments where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

2. The Law on School Attendance and Right to a Full Time Education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at the Family of Schools, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.

This means their child must attend every day our schools are 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.

Whilst children attending Jack and Jill Nursery School are all below compulsory school age, we adopt the same approach to managing absence and supporting families to achieve good levels of attendance. Full engagement in school is essential for children's attainment, wellbeing and wider life choices.

3. Aims of this Attendance Policy

To maintain good levels of attendance, we aim to:

- foster supportive partnerships with parents so that solutions to barriers to attending can be resolved swiftly and effectively
- highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- define roles and responsibilities for attendance management and promote consistency in data collection and management across our schools
- provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- recognise and address the needs of individual pupils requiring reintegration following significant periods of absence.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

The Heads of School ensure arrangements for managing attendance are operated effectively within their schools and work supportively with parents to improve levels immediately if there is cause for concern about either lateness or attendance.

The SLT analyse data to report to the Principal and other stakeholders.

The school administrators ensure accurate and timely completion of attendance registers and contact parents immediately to investigate all unexplained absences.

It is the responsibility of all to recognise and act upon children missing education as a safeguarding priority and report concerns about absence to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

5. Definitions

Registration

Attendance registers are a record of children in attendance or absent during the Family of School's designated registration periods.

The designated start and end of the schools' day is published to parents upon admission to the schools as follows:

- Jack and Jill Nursery School 0845-1200 or 1500

- Nightingale House Pre-Preparatory 0830-1530 (Reception 0830-1515)
- Clarence House Preparatory 0815-1545.

The morning registration period remains open for 30 minutes from the published start of day and records children as either:

- Present
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The second registration period is following the lunch break period, usually 1330 when attendance is recorded in the same way for all children.

All absences are recorded with an appropriate national attendance and absence code from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Use of the appropriate code denotes whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and attendance data for individual children for the school is drawn from the application of these codes.

It is the Head/Lead teachers' discretion whether a child's absence is classified and recorded as authorised or not.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is absent from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been notified of this by the parent. For example, if a child is unwell, the parent logs the absence on Family or emails the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised; parents do not have this authority.

Not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised eg taking a child out of school to go shopping or for a leisure activity is unlikely to ever be an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without the permission of the school.

Absence is likely to be unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent Absence

The DfE (Department of Education) defines a persistent absentee as a pupil who, at any point of the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether any of it is authorised. Persistent absentee status may change as the terms progress, but such pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

Attendance Monitoring

For girls of compulsory school age attendance above 96% is the level expected in normal circumstances.

Should levels fall within 95-91% parents will be contacted to advise them of this and opportunity to discuss reasons for the poor attendance and opportunity to discuss ways in which the school can support the child and family in improving this.

When attendance falls below 90% and therefore within the category of persistent absence a meeting will be arranged with the parents to investigate further. Actions to improve the situation and review progress will be agreed and updated should the situation not improve or develop as expected. This approach is one of collaboration between the parents, child in an age-appropriate way and our school community.

6. Procedures

Absence

If a child is absent, parents are expected to record the reason on Family so the class teacher is aware of this when recording the children present at the start of the day.

By the end of the registration period i.e. 30 minutes after the published start of the school day the school administrator will call the parent/guardian of children absent from school to ascertain the reason for absence and check on the safety of the child. They will enquire about the specific reason for absence if the message added by the parent is unclear or needs further investigation.

The school administrators ensure all attendance codes are correctly entered on the register and alert the Head of School/DSL when unacceptable absence levels start to appear.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Request for absence must be sent to the school prior in advance of the day of absence with full details of the reason for the request and in the case of an unavoidable appointment an estimate of the time the child is likely to be absent from school. This is expected to be the minimum required. This will either be authorised or not depending on the reason for the request. Further details may be requested before a decision can be made.

The published school year is short at our schools, and holidays should not be taken during term time; even two or three days affect not only a child's progress but that of the rest of the class. Authorisation for holidays during term time is unlikely to be granted and it is for the Head/School Lead to assess each request on its merits.

In exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, the Head of Schools's permission for absence may be requested but this must be sought and approved before any booking or travel arrangements are made.

Long-term Absence

When children are unable to attend school for a period over five days arrangements will be made with his/her parents to ensure contact is maintained and every assistance is given to ensure the child covers work missed.

Depending on the reason for absence this could either be through a period of online learning, or programme to cover once the child has recovered sufficiently from a lengthy illness.

The class teacher and Head of School will manage this process with the parents.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

Contact will always be made with the parent of any child marked as absent without reason.

If no explanation is given or the reason for absence cannot be authorised this will be recorded as unauthorised with a note for the cause of absence when known.

If a child has repeated or high level of unauthorised absence, the parents will always contact to discuss and overcome the circumstances preventing the child from attending school.

At this stage, the DSL will be involved to take whatever action is appropriate to ensure the safety of the child and that he/she is able to access the education provided.

7. Pupils Prevented from Attending School Due to Physical or Mental Ill Health

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations, or variable moods.

It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may help with the underlying issue whilst being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

Our school staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents and should work alongside families to mitigate anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided.

In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- working in partnership with the pupil and family to put support in place and working with other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, our staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. They should:

- facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue
- consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents
- consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance
- make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, schools are expected to:

- work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed
- work in partnership with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day
- establish strategies for removing any in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Principal to monitor overall attendance ensuring that every effort is made to maintain high attendance figures.

The attendance registers are legal documents and entries must be preserved for 3 years from the date of entry.

Registers record pupils present during the registration period so can only be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time and it is therefore necessary to subsequently correct the register. This should note the person making the change to the original entry and time/date of change.

The SLT monitor levels of attendance so that appropriate support is provided for children and families of those not achieving acceptable levels.

The SLT report on headline attendance figures to the Principal and other stakeholders, comparing figures for the different schools, cohorts, and year on year.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance as part of their general safeguarding responsibilities to the children in their care.

The school administrators manage all associated administrative requirements and ensure the admissions and attendance registers are kept in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Any concerns about the attendance of a child must be reported to the Head of School/Lead teachers/DSL for further investigation with the parents.