SIR JOHN THURSBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Attendance Policy

Reviewed:	September 2026
Date approved by Governors:	**To be reviewed 9th December 2026**
To be reviewed:	**September 2027**
Person Responsible:	Assistant Headteacher

AMBITION
RESPECT
BELONGING

Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance 4
3. School procedures 4
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence 6
5. Strategies for promoting attendance 8
6. Attendance monitoring 8
7. Roles and responsibilities 9
8. Monitoring arrangements 10
9. Links with other policies 10
Appendix 1: Attendance codes 11
Appendix 2: Absence Procedure 12
Appendix 3: Absence - Escalation of Intervention 12
Appendix 4: Attendance: Every minute Counts 13-15

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Sir John Thursby Community College, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore provides the best life chances for our pupils. We will encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.

- This policy has been written to comply with Department for Education Advice (DfE) on school attendance and guidance from Lancashire County Council.
- All young people between the ages of 11-18 are required to be in full-time education. All young people between 16 and 18 are required to be either in full time education or in training or in employment with training attached to it.
- Regular attendance to school is a key factor in determining a pupil's educational outcomes. Pupils whose attendance is 95% or above are extremely likely to realise their potential: nationally 73% of them will achieve the national benchmark of 4+ passes in English and Maths whereas the figures of those with attendance below 90% is 35%. It is estimated that a week's absence every year for five years results in a pupil achieving the equivalent of half a grade less.

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote good attendance
- To outline the procedures that the school uses in relation to attendance

The Government changed key legislation that came into force on 1st September 2013. From then, school was not allowed to grant permission for absence for holidays or visits in term time except in exceptional circumstances.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures, additionally is meets the requirements of Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.27am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 for Years 7-11. Registers are marked immediately and a pupil will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. Pupils who arrive at the lesson 4 or more minutes after the lesson start time will be classed as late, receive a behaviour point on ClassCharts, and their time to lesson will be logged by the teacher. The Year Teams will monitor this for repeat occurrences.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents /carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6), either by phone or by calling into school and reporting to reception. Direct line 01282 683071, or 01282 682313 and select option 1.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Home visits for pupils who are persistently absent or severely absent will, where possible occur on day one, unless medical evidence is provided.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents / carers 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.

Parent/carers should contact school in advance of medical appointments and provide appointment information (if available).

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The times of the school day are published on the school website, and we encourage pupils to be in school at least 5 minutes before the start of their first lesson. Registers are marked at the start of all lessons. Pupils who receive a late mark for being late to school or any lesson will be placed into lunchtime restoration on the same day if it is a morning session, and the following day for an afternoon session. Tracking of repeat lates will be completed by the Attendance and pastoral team and additional action will occur for those who are regularly late to class.

It will be the pupil's responsibility to attend this restoration, and it will be upscaled if not attended.

At **9.00 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a pupil arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that a parent/carer could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice/ Prosecution if the problem persists.

If a pupil has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher/Attendance Officer / Family Support Team or a member of the Head of Year teams to resolve the problem.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a student is absent, we will:

- Telephone/visit families on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them or if the child is a P/A
- Invite them to discuss the situation with our Attendance Lead, Family Support Worker and / or Pastoral lead for their year group if absences persist.

3.6 Reporting to parents

As part of our reporting process to parents / carers, for each progress report issued during an academic year, student attendance will be highlighted.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils' parents/carers belong e.g. Eid, but no more than one day for a festival and no more than two religious festivals in any one academic year. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and 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
- Study leave – All pupils will be expected to attend school until their final GCSE exam. Study leave will only be granted in line with guidance from the Department for Education

4.2 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority can fine parents/carers via the use of penalty notices and prosecution through Lancashire County Council's Attendance Legal Team for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. This includes any absences from school whereby it is not authorised.
A penalty notice will be requested for unauthorised holidays or leave of absence out of school (G code).

The Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. The changes from 19 August 2024 are:
• Penalty notices issued for offences will be £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
• Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
• The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period1. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
• A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
• Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after the 19th August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

From 01/01/2025, the following rules will apply:

1. Unauthorised leave less than 15 school days: penalty notice issued

2. Unauthorised leave of 15 school days or more: the Local Authority will review any requests for penalty notices and may prosecute parents and not offer the opportunity to pay a penalty notice fine instead.

Unauthorised absences (0 and U codes)
Attendance levels will be closely monitored by school and where engagement strategies have not had the desired effect, the attendance Team will consider:

- Holding a meeting with parents
- Working with external agencies where appropriate
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

School works closely with the Local Authority, who support us with strategies to manage individual cases. There is an expectation from the Government that we tackle attendance concerns consistently. Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher would request support from the local authority school attendance legal team. This could result in the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice or prosecution to parents/carer.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents/carers in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This includes:

- Letters regarding Lates, Unauthorised and percentage attendance.
- Meetings in school between parents/carers, pupils pastoral staff and the Headteacher.
- Home visits
- Parenting Contracts.
- Use of Early / Family Help Assessment (EHA) and/or referral to outside agencies.
- Penalty Notices.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors student absences on a daily basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Sir John Thursby will use electronic systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil and whole school level and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future action planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters.
Parents/carers will be informed via telephone/letter if attendance is declining or not improving towards our expected level of 97%.

If after contacting parents/carers, a pupil's absence continues to rise, School will explore whether additional support is required and whether a referral needs to be completed to the school attendance legal team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a **persistent absentee**. Students with an attendance of 50% or lower are classified as **Severe absentee.**

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Our attendance data will be used to track individual student attendance and group attendance.

6.1 Children Missing in Education

A Child Missing in Education (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full-time education. Children missing from education can mean either a child being unenrolled or a child on

extended absence. The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school may contact the Local Authority who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation. School have a legal duty to inform the appropriate LA if:

- A child is absent for 10 days following on from a period of approved leave
- A child is absent for 20 consecutive days without approved leave
- A child fails to attend school regularly
- A child is deleted from the register when the next school is not known

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher

The Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Assistant Headteacher supports the Attendance officer and Family Support Team in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher/Head of Year Teams / Family Support Manager
- Works with family support workers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents / carers to discuss attendance issues
- First day response: contact parents/carers if a reason for absence has not been provided. Where possible this is be in the form of a phone call.
- Input and update the attendance registers in line with statutory guidance.
- Regularly identify and monitor student, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups.
- Provide appropriate attendance data to staff as directed by the school attendance lead.
- Produce letters and certificates/reward as appropriate and required, including generating information for internal competitions.
- Update the SIMs/ClassCharts system with all relevant data regarding absence and interventions for attendance.
- Monitor the attendance of pupils in alternative provision.

- Liaise with external agencies such as EHE and CME.
- Informs the Assistant Headteacher if/when fixed-penalty notices are required

7.4 Class teachers/Form Tutors

- Take a register each day / lesson.
- Address reasons for student absence. Alert the attendance team when letters home are required or follow up conversations due to reasoning or concern.
- Ensure that the importance of attendance is high profile with the form group.
- Support attendance interventions as directed by the Assistant Headteacher.

7.5 Office/Reception Staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers if they use the main switchboard and transfer them to the attendance officer so that they can discuss the absence. Parents / carers are encouraged to call the dedicated Attendance line: 01282 683071

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to:

- Climate for Learning Policy
- Child Prtotection and Safeguarding Policy
- Home School School Agreement

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Attendance codes from September 2024

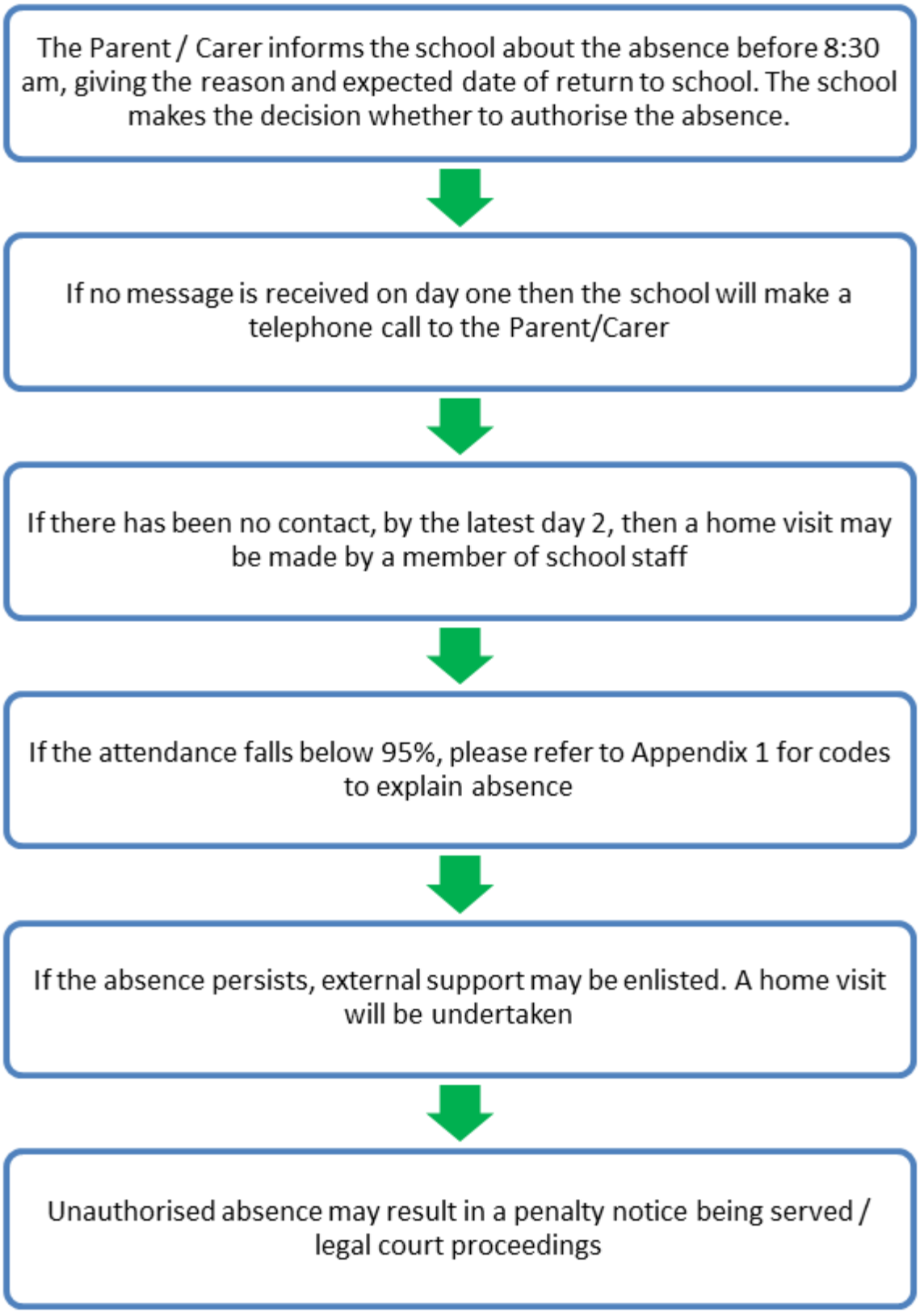
Lancashire County Council

Present	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in an approved sporting activity
W	Attending approved work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
Absent – leave of absence	
D	Dual registered at another school *
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school *
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes **
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of (LA) access arrangements *
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available *
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel *
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed *
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed *
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention *
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law *
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause *
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2

ABSENCE PROCEDURE
(Issued to Parents/Carers)

Parents have a responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. Please ensure you notify the school of any changes to your contact telephone numbers. This is important for the safeguarding of all students.



Appendix 3

Absence - Escalation of Intervention
– for students Under 90%

Student attendance will be monitored and intervention will take **place every 2 weeks.**

Stage	%	Action	Person involved	
Reward and recognition	100-97%	Certificates, competitions and prze draws	Attendance officer, Year teams and form tutors	
Stage 1	96.9-94%	Phone call to parent /carer by the Form Tutor informing them attendance is a below expectation	FT	
Stage 2	93.9-90%	Year Team/Attendance Officer **contact** with parent /carer and student	Year Team and Attendance Officer	Attendance Officer/Family Support Team may become involved at any stage if requested.
Stage 3 Attendance Panel	>90%	**PA Meeting** with Attendance Offcier, Family Support Team and where necessary and appropriate AHT for Inclusion. Heads of Year are also invited to attend where possible. External including School Nurse, Police Community Support Officer as appropriate	Headteacher Assistant Headteacher Family Support Team Attendance Officer Year teams	
Fast Track	n/a	Action with the Local Authority / Court action Parents / Carers to be given documentation at the Attendance Panel of the Fast Track process/implications		
Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) – can be actioned at any stage. The Headteacher delegates the proceudre for FPNs, but has oversight.				

Appendix 4: Attendance leaflet use to support parents / carers and students in understanding the impact of absence

Attendance: Every minute counts

Research shows that children with good attendance perform better in their exams than those with poor attendance. When your child misses school, they are missing out on valuable learning. If they miss school regularly, they are missing out on learning that may never be caught up. Friendships and social activities are a vital part of school life that enhances self-confidence and wellbeing. When children experience extended absence, they often struggle to integrate back into friendship groups and can experience social difficulties, alongside struggling with their academic studies.

0 days absent = 0 missed lessons	100%	Perfect
4 days absent = 20 missed lessons	98%	Very good
8 days absent = 40 missed lessons	96%	Good
10 days absent = 50 missed lessons	95%	Improvement needed
11 days absent = 55 missed lessons	94%	Concerned
19 days absent = 95 missed lessons	90%	Very concerned
29 days absent = 145 missed lessons	85%	Significant impact on learning

5 days absence over the whole school year

97-100%

Your child has a good chance of success and progress

20 days absence over the whole school year

90%

Your child has less chance of success and making progress is harder

20+ days absence over the whole school year

Under 90%

This is detrimental to your child's progress

Minutes count – Being Late means Lost Learning

How late is your child to school?	How many missed lessons?
5 minutes late each day	16 lessons
10 minutes late each day	32 lessons
15 mins late each day	48 lessons
20 mins each day	63 lessons
30 mins each day	95 lessons

There are 175 days each year where your child is not in school, these days are for family time, holidays & appointments.