

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Attendance Policy at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School forms part of our Safeguarding Policy Portfolio and demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of all our pupils.

1. Rationale

- 1.1. Regular attendance has always been important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Pupils need to attend school if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages. It can place children at risk and in some cases can result in some pupils being drawn into patterns of inappropriate or criminal behaviour.
- 1.2. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a parent, an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age is required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. The school is responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore, they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in the children a respect for education – and for those who deliver it. Parents should also impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home.
- 1.3. The purpose of this document is to state clearly the school's policy and procedures for dealing with absence and to make clear the responsibilities of the parent and school in maximising attendance.

2. Lateness

- 2.1. Registration takes place from 9 – 9.15am. If a child arrives at school after 9 am but before 9.15 am they will be marked as 'L' for late. This will not constitute an absence - but a late arrival.
- 2.2. Where a child arrives at school after 9am, they should report to the office and the child, or their representative, should complete the 'Late Arrival Book.'

- 2.3. If there is not an adequate explanation (e.g. slept late, bad traffic, missed bus) the child will be marked 'U' indicating an unauthorised absence.
- 2.4. Punctuality will be monitored on a half termly basis. If there is a concern, the school will write to the child's parents or carers to bring this to their attention.

3. Authorised Absence

3.1. Absence Requests

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Permission from the Head Teacher must be sought in advance using the S2 Absence Request form (See Appendix 1). The form will be returned to parents informing them of the Head Teacher's decision prior to the absence. There are special occasions for which the school will determine whether an absence is authorised or not. Only exceptional occasions should be sanctioned. A birthday party would not normally be considered to be exceptional, whilst a pupil attending an older brother's/sister's graduation might be granted leave of absence. Other examples of special occasions that are likely to be authorised are those due to family bereavement, days of religious observance, and external examinations such as ballet or music. In considering individual cases, the Head Teacher will have regard to the following:

- The nature of the event
- Its frequency (i.e. is it a one-off or likely to be a regular pattern)
- The overall attendance pattern of the child

3.2. Medical Appointments

Although the school will generally authorise medical appointments where evidence of the appointment is provided. We request that parents try to make these appointments outside school hours where possible. We expect children to attend school both before and after the appointment.

3.3. Unauthorised Absence

If the school refuses a parent's request but the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may make the child's parents liable to a penalty notice for each child and payable by each parent/carer e.g both mum and dad. Penalties are issued by the Education Welfare Officer.

3.4. Reporting an unplanned absence

It is the parent or carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of a child's unplanned absence and every other day after that.

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Parents should telephone the school first thing in the morning (before 8.30am if possible) or send a note along with another child. If a child is absent for five consecutive days due to illness, parents and carers will need to provide evidence of the child's attendance at a GP surgery. If this is not possible the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may make parents and carers liable for legal action. Unplanned absences that occur on the next consecutive school day following an unauthorised absence, will be automatically recorded as unauthorized.

4. Monitoring Attendance

- 4.1. Attendance will be monitored on a half termly basis by the Pastoral Support Worker, Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Letters stating concerns will be sent to the parents and carers of children whose attendance falls below 95%. Children with persistent absence will be raised for discussion within the school's pastoral system and their parents/carers will be invited to attend a discussion with the Pastoral Support Worker/Senior Designated Officer for Safeguarding. The involvement of other agencies will also be requested if required. In some cases parents and carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for all further absences of the child for the duration of the academic year. Parents and carers of any child with more than ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence in an academic year will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer EWO. The Headteacher will periodically issue information and news about attendance, including the attendance target for the forthcoming year. Children with 100% attendance each term will be celebrated and presented with a certificate signed by the Head Teacher.

Signed: Chair of Committee

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy has been written and reviewed with due regard to the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that no member of our school community suffers discrimination or disadvantage regardless of age, race, gender reassignment, disability, civil partnership, religion and belief (or lack of belief), pregnancy and maternity, gender or sexual orientation.