

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



Mission Statement

At St Joseph's we welcome all as members of our school family. We learn and care for each other as brothers and sisters; enriched by the teachings of Jesus.

We encourage Creativity; valuing our unique talents and skills as gifts from God.

Working alongside pupils and parents/carers, we can all succeed and realise great things.

Serving the communities within the Parish of St Joseph's and St John the Baptist and beyond, we reach out to all.

We respect each other, our different cultures and faiths celebrating our richness and diversity.

Through worship and prayer we show our love; striving to achieve our very best.

This policy reflects the vision and aims of St Joseph's Catholic School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents* and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

*Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).

Principles

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents* and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents * to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent*.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- *Parents* keeping children off school unnecessarily*
- *Truancy before or during the school day*
- *Absences which have never been properly explained*
- *Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*

Examples	
Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Genuine illness of the pupil ✓ Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil ✓ Visits to prospective new schools ✓ External exams or educational assessments ✓ An emergency (e.g. bereavement) ✓ A medical appointment which <u>must be</u> in school time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park • Holidays in term time • Birthday treat • Oversleeping due to a late night • Looking after other children/other family member • Appointments for other family members
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Holidays will not be authorised during term time. In exceptional circumstances absences may be authorised e.g. Family illness, bereavement. Parents/ carers should write to the Headteacher to seek permission.

Parents* are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

Tracking Attendance

Our Attendance and Welfare officer, Mrs Messenger, closely tracks each pupil's attendance in order to identify problems and look for patterns. It is her role to contact parents if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation. She monitors and reviews persistent absence (those with attendance below 95%) and these are reported to the Headteacher and the Home to School Liaison Officer, Mrs. Maggie Baker. Mrs. Baker provides guidance and support in improving pupil absence.

If there is persistent absence, which cannot be resolved between the school and parents, the Home- School Liaison Officer will be asked for support.

She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents. A **Fixed Penalty Notice** (£60 per parent for each absent child) may be issued if the child has more than 3 days unauthorised absence in one year.

Role of the School:

We have the responsibility to ensure that all children receive a minimum of twenty one teaching hours a week. This does not include time for registration or collective worship. The school's role is:

- To register the children promptly and accurately.
- To record absence appropriately, including signing in and out during school hours.
- To record as late, pupils who arrive after 8.45am and before the close of registers at 9.15am.
- To record as unauthorised absences, pupils who arrive after the registers close at 9.15am (unless there are unavoidable mitigating circumstances).

- To check registers daily for first day absence.
- To telephone those parents who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence, priority being given to:
 - Children on the Protection Register or involved with Social Services.
 - Children in families where there is a particular concern.
 - Children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact.
- To send a letter home to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask them why the child is absent.
- To keep records of all telephone calls and keep all letters concerning absence.
- To monitor regularly absence and lateness, to look for patterns and to take appropriate action.
- To inform the Home to School Liaison Officer of any concerns regarding absence or punctuality.
- To obtain details of telephone contacts for all pupils and to ensure that records are updated regularly by writing to parents to remind them of their responsibilities, whilst requesting current contact information. An emergency telephone number must be recorded for every pupil.
- To send reminders regarding absence and punctuality on the school's regular newsletters.
- To raise concerns regarding absence at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if necessary.
- To discourage the practice of taking children out of school for odd days and holidays.
- For the Headteacher to decide whether or not to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances and to inform the parents or carers of the decision.
- To monitor and set attendance targets annually.
- To encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.

It is the responsibility of parents or carers:

- To ensure their child attends school regularly
- To ensure their child arrives on time.
- To contact the school before 9.30 if their child is unable to attend.
- To support the school in its aim to raise achievement through good attendance at school.
- To notify the school by on the first day of absence, as early as possible and no later than 9.30am**.
- To send a dated letter explaining the absence, when the child returns to school.
- To agree a later registration time with the Headteacher if the child needs regular medical attention before coming to school. The child must always be signed in on arrival.
- To inform the office in writing or to provide Medical Appointment Cards if the child needs to attend a medical appointment in school time. Whenever possible, please try to make all appointments out of school hours.
- To liaise with the school about specific family problems, which might cause absence.

** If we have had no contact by 9.30 am, we may ask the Welfare Officer to visit you at home, in order to establish the reason for the absence to fulfil the school's duty of care.

Targets and Initiatives

We have a reward system in place which aims to encourage good attendance, and discourage unauthorised absence. Parents/Carers are regularly reminded, through the school newsletter, of the importance of good attendance and of the effect persistent or longer periods of absence have on the child's learning. We record each class' attendance in the newsletter.

Each week we award good attendance awards to a FS/KS1 and a KS2 class. A certificate is awarded to all pupil with a 100% attendance in a term, and pupils who achieve a 100% attendance in the whole year are rewarded with a voucher.

Missing In Education

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the Headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School as soon as possible, to arrange an appointment to discuss the situation.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated;

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next place of education
- The address of the new school/place of education
- A new home address if appropriate
- The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff and Governors are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.