

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy and Guidelines

Mission Statement

At St. Joseph's we aim to promote
A learning community based on the Gospel values of Love, Trust and Respect,
where the achievements of everyone are recognised and celebrated.

Living, Learning and Loving together with Christ.

In line with our Mission Statement, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to make the best possible progress.

We aim to

- Provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome
- Maintain an attendance level of a **minimum** of 96%
- Maintain children's and families awareness of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.

Good attendance is important because

- Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and underachievement
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to manage
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

Parents/carers can help by

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason for absence and an indication of when the child is expected to return to school
- Arranging dental and doctor appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending a note to school explaining the reason for absence on a child's return to school
- Keeping school updated, either by telephone or letter, if a child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

School will

- Follow up any unexplained absences by phone or letter as soon as possible
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in assemblies, newsletters and the school brochure
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality, including participation in LA attendance initiatives
- Publish the child's attendance on their annual report
- Inform parents/carers of any concerns regarding their child's attendance and punctuality
- Offer support through the involvement of our Parent Support Adviser and/or LA School Attendance Officer.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absence'. Examples of such absences might be illness of the child, family bereavement, religious observance. We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that results in a child being absent. It is vital that parents/carers inform school at such times so that we can respond appropriately.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as 'unauthorised absences'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- ✦ Waiting on a delivery
- ✦ Going shopping or for a hair cut
- ✦ Going on a family day out
- ✦ Your child's birthday
- ✦ Sleeping in after a late night
- ✦ Holidays (in term time)
- ✦ Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact parents/carers and consider legal action if a child has unauthorised absence.

Punctuality

- School starts at 8.55 am. This is the time when children must be in line on the playground/or in class
- Punctuality is important for your child as this ensures the day starts well and no information or instructions are missed
- Late arrivals are disruptive and can be embarrassing for the child. We take the view ‘there are no late children, only late parents’.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with DFE guidance
- School will inform parents/carers if there are concerns about punctuality.

Term Time Holidays and Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of term time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head teacher in accordance with school policy as agreed by the Governing Body. The school will consider authorising up to 10 days absence (or more in very exceptional circumstances) but parents **must meet with the Head teacher to discuss the application and apply in advance for permission.**

- ✦ Requests for holidays in term time **will not** be authorised once children reach statutory school age. Absence taken and not authorised could be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine.
- ✦ Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term-time **must complete an application form in advance of the arrangements being confirmed.** Forms are available from the school office. The Head teacher will consider the request and advise of the decision. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence during term-time be authorised. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term-time is not a valid reason for an application for term-time leave).
- ✦ If there are concerns around attendance, (e.g. attendance is below 90%) then leave of absence for term-time will not be authorised.
- ✦ If school does not agree to leave of absence during term-time and parents/carers take a child on holiday, the absence has to be recorded as unauthorised.
- ✦ Please remember that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work and academic

achievement can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom to receive quality first teaching.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. We will ensure that the pupil is supported to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Leaving or transferring to another school

If a child is leaving school other than as expected at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parents are asked to

- ✦ Give our school full information about their plans including date of move, new address, new school and start date when known, reason for moving (form to be completed available from the school office)
- ✦ Confirm our school have a current contact/mobile number
- ✦ Take a school compliment slip so that the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- ✦ Please let us know when you plan to move.

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and parents have not given the above information and cannot be contacted, then the child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By ensuring school has the above information before you move, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and best practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases legal proceedings are taken which may result in parents being prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

Every Day Counts

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Next Review Autumn 2022