



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Date ratified by Governors: | December 2022 |
| Date of next review of the policy: | Autumn 2023 |
| This policy is reviewed: | Annually |

Learn together and grow in God's love

Aspiration - Compassion - Community - Faith - Respect – Responsibility

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Section 1: Aim | 3 |
| Section 2: Principles and Objectives..... | 3 |
| Section 3: Procedures..... | 3 |
| Section 4: Monitoring Attendance & Lateness | 6 |
| Section 5: Appendix 1..... | 9 |

Section 1: Aim

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring, Catholic environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. It is the aim of all staff at St Joseph's to work in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers to enable all pupils to achieve the best possible attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year.

Section 2: Principles and Objectives

The aim of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy reflects the aims and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff. There is a clear link between poor attendance and lower academic achievement.

OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at the school.
2. To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
3. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
4. To recognise the external factors which influence pupils' attendance and work with parents/carers to address difficulties.
5. To implement a system of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
6. To promote effective partnerships with other Services and External Agencies, where appropriate, to promote good attendance.
7. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Section 3: Procedures

3.1 Registration

Schools and academies by law have to register pupils twice a day; first thing in the morning at the start of the school day, and again in the afternoon session. If a pupil fails to attend or arrives late, they can be marked as absent for that session.

Class teachers will mark the registers within 20 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions starting.

3.2 Parent/Carer Responsibility

It is the parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend the school where they are registered regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of children and then should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Once a child is registered at the school, attendance is compulsory.

If a pupil is unable to attend the school, parents/carers are expected:

- To contact the school before 8.30am every day of a pupil's absence by email or telephone. A reason for absence must be given. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.
- To contact the school when the period of absence runs longer than originally advised giving a reason and new date of expected return to the school.
- To provide a letter (or written note) explaining the absence on the day the pupil returns to

the school.

- To provide supporting evidence if requested, to enable informed decisions to be made by the school when authorising absence

If a child is absent and the parent or carer has not contacted the school, then as part of our safeguarding policy, staff will:

- Send an email and/or text reminding them to make contact.
- If there is no response, the office will try and contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts. This is so that we can check on the safety of the child.
- If it has not been possible to contact either the parent, carer or emergency contacts then school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will definitely be made.

Parents/carers should contact the school if they are concerned about their child's attendance, or if their child is experiencing difficulties either in or outside the school which are affecting their attendance. The school aims to work in partnership with parents/carers and will discuss ways to support a pupil and family to ensure improved attendance.

3.3 Role of the School Staff

The headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the local authority. The Attendance Officer monitors attendance together with the member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present or mark as an 'N' if a child is absent. The Attendance Officer will mark late or absent children in the morning and telephone or email the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact. It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence. If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' 2 weeks following the absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence. When a reason has been provided the Attendance Officer will ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes – see appendix 1)

Absence Authorisation

If a pupil of compulsory School age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. Only the Headteacher, or designated staff, can authorise a pupil's absence. Additional evidence such as proof of appointments, or letters from GPs confirming illness, may be required before an absence is authorised.

Authorised Absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason, such as illness or another unavoidable reason which have been authorised by the Headteacher, or designated staff.

Unauthorised Absences are those that the Headteacher, or designated staff, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence by the parent and can include:

- Keeping pupils away from the school without a good reason
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at the school too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the school in advance

- Absences where evidence has been requested, but not provided by the parent/carer

Absences immediately before or after school holidays will only be authorised with supporting evidence.

3.4 Term Time Holidays and Arrangements for Requesting Exceptional Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

A written application must be made to request a leave of absence in advance, with supporting evidence. ([see appendix 2](#)) The headteacher will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Authorisation and length of leave is at the headteacher's discretion. If leave is taken without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority. Children who return 10 days or more after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a 'Child Missing in Education' and may be taken off the school roll. A Penalty Notice may also be issued.

Notes regarding exceptional circumstances:

- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is not considered an exceptional circumstance
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Pupils may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave
- Absences for important religious observances are often considered but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events

The legal framework governing pupil's leave of absence from school during term time is set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

3.5 Medical and Dental Appointments

Where such appointments in School time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance if possible. A 'present' mark may still be awarded if the pupil attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. Evidence of the appointment may be requested before the absence is authorised.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea, then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy

of a prescription)

- f) Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence

3.1 Punctuality

The school day starts at 8:50am. All pupils are expected to arrive at the school by 8.40am and go directly to their designated areas. Registers close at 9.30am. Pupils arriving after 8.50am must enter school via the main school entrance and sign in using the electronic signing in system. The pupil will be recorded as late when registration has closed ('L'); those arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as unauthorised absence ('U').

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives promptly. Parents/carers of pupils who arrive persistently late will be contacted and if no improvement is observed, further action will result, which may include the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice warning.

Section 4: Monitoring Attendance & Lateness

Improving attendance is a whole School responsibility. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The diagram below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention.

The school has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concerns. Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school will carry out regular register checks and contact parents/carers when a pupil's attendance or punctuality is under target. Parents/carers may be invited to attend meetings to the School to discuss issues affecting a pupil's attendance.

Each pupil will be considered individually before any action is taken. Actions will be agreed by the School Attendance Officer and the member of Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for attendance. Actions may include:

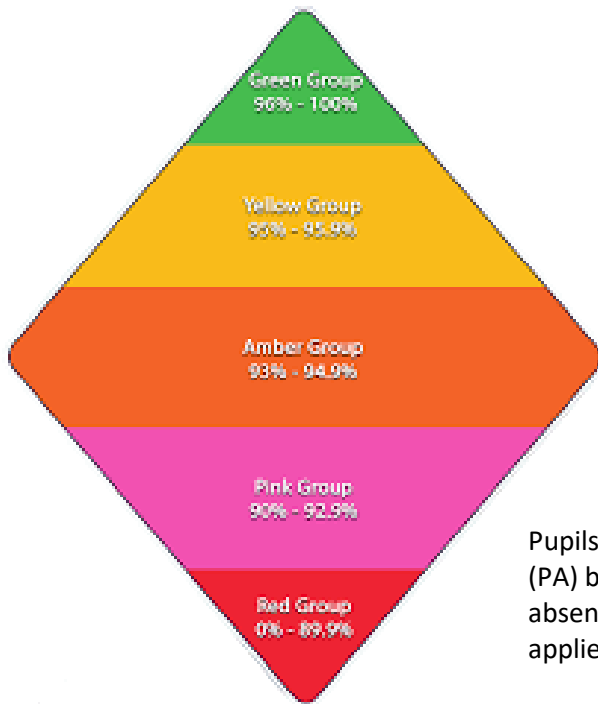
- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The Attendance Officer contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve
- Writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

The school monitors children's attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 92%

Letter 1 – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting that every effort is made to ensure attendance improves.

Letter 2 – raising concerns that attendance is low or has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from the Attendance Officer

Letter 3 – either a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Attendance Officer to review attendance or an attendance panel meeting with the LA Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)



| Attendance Groups | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Green | No risk |
| Yellow | Risk of underachievement |
| Amber | Serious risk of underachievement |
| Pink | Severe risk of underachievement |
| Red | Extreme risk - Court action |

Pupils who miss 10% of school days are called 'Persistent Absentees' (PA) by the Department for Education whatever the reason for their absence (authorised or unauthorised). Special procedures will be applied to pupils who fall into this category.

What your child's attendance percentage means

| Child's Attendance | Action |
|--------------------|---|
| 96%+ | Excellent attendance |
| 94%-95.9% | Good attendance – well done! Strive to build on this |
| 90%-93.9% | Concern – Attendance is below average and they are missing out on what other children are learning and doing. School and parents need to work closely to improve the situation. Attendance carefully monitored |
| Below 90% | Possible Penalty notice / legal proceedings. Children whose attendance is in this bracket is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence (PA). The government has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children as it is a major cause for concern. Schools have targets to reduce the level of PAs and the school and local authority work very closely together along with families to support them in getting the children in school every day. However, if attendance does not improve, the next steps could be penalty notices and possible legal proceedings. |

Persistent Absence (PA)

Your child will be considered as a PA pupil using the following criteria:

| Term | Number of sessions missed since beginning of academic year (1 session is half a day) |
|----------|--|
| Autumn 1 | 7 or more |
| Autumn 2 | 14 or more |
| Spring 1 | 20 or more |
| Spring 2 | 25 or more |
| Summer 1 | 31 or more |
| Summer 2 | 38 or more |

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the matter being referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued or for investigation which could result in prosecution. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per pupils, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. The legal framework governing Penalty Notices is set out in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, amended 2013.

Pupils whose attendance and punctuality are outstanding, or is most improved, will be recognised with certificates and considered for further rewards which include prizes and whole class treats.

Section 5: Appendix 1

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

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| General | | |
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a <i>supervised</i> off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/visiting another educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |
| Authorised Absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical / dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| Unauthorised Absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code will be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for a has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |
| Other Codes | | |
| X | Not required to be in school / COVID related absence | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend or absence due to COVID |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school or the pupil has left during the academic year |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day |



Application for Pupil Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Permission for absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

- Term-time leave will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to assist the school by not taking children away in school time.
- All applications for leave must be made to the Headteacher, at least two weeks in advance, from the parent the child lives with, and are at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.
- Applications should clearly state the reason why the absence is required and the start and end date of the absence. Please attach copies of flight booking confirmation / itinerary / return flight tickets and any other relevant information.
- The Headteacher will not authorise leave before and during assessment period, such as SATS or teaching assessments tests.
- You may be fined and/or issued with a penalty notice for taking your child on holiday during term time.

The Headteacher will take into account a pupil's previous record of attendance when making decisions. It is important to note that the Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

This form should be completed to enable the Headteacher to decide whether to authorise the application for leave.

Failure to ensure regular and punctual school attendance may result in the issuing of a penalty notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and/or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPECTS EVERY PUPIL TO ACHIEVE
AT LEAST 97% ATTENDANCE**

