



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revision	Date	Author	Summary of Amendments	Reviewed by	Review Date	Approved (Date of GB Meeting)	Next Review
1	17/01/21	G Bath	New version for approval	C&SI	March 2022	31/03/2022	March 2023.

Attendance Policy

Vision



Together we love - Together we hope - Together we learn

Mission

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an inclusive, vibrant, Catholic community where we enable and encourage everyone to share and nurture a love of learning and the love of Christ.

Together, we hope to inspire ourselves and each other to be the best we can and to embrace our future with confidence.

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. St Joseph's ethos encourages children to feel their presence in school is important and that their contribution to their class and the whole school is missed if they are absent or arrive late.

The policy applies to all pupils in years 1-6, and it also applies to Reception age children who are of statutory school age. Children reach statutory school age in the term after they are 5 years old.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To maximise the attendance of all pupils.
- To provide an environment which encourages optimum attendance, and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is cause for concern and to work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including an education welfare officer (EWO) and multi-agency teams.

Roles And Responsibilities

The following people have responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- Head Teacher
- Class Teachers
- Office and Administrative staff
- Governors
- Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The school will:

- ensure that effective systems are in place to monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- work in partnership with key agencies over any issues.
- provide the Local Authority (LA) and Education Welfare Officer(EWO) with accurate information regarding unauthorised absences.
- provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate policy success and practice.
- write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

The governing body will:

- determine and approve an appropriate Attendance policy.
- monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance policy.

Class Teachers will:

- provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class using the class register. (The register is a legal document and teachers are required, within their contractual responsibilities to take an attendance register twice a day, at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions.)
- respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of attendance.
- organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period.

Office and administrative staff will:

- make use of specialist attendance software to record, store and monitor the schools legal responsibilities.
- monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant reports where necessary.
- contact parents/carers on first day of their child's absence if contact has not been made, to establish the reason for the absence.
- ensure that all absences have been established and correctly recorded at the end of each week.

Education Welfare Officer will:

- enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- work with the whole school and monitor individual children's attendance where necessary.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after 08.20am will be considered as late and must report to the school office so their attendance can be recorded. The gates to the playgrounds will be closed at 8.20am.

Pupils arriving after 8.45am will be officially absent for the morning session. This will be recorded as un-authorized unless a satisfactory reason is given and accepted or by agreement with the Head Teacher.

Action to address lateness will be taken to improve punctuality where necessary, in line with the roles and responsibilities of the Class and Head Teacher.

Sickness

Parents/carers are required to contact the school on the first day of sickness to provide the reason for the absence by 08.30am, and on each subsequent day of absence thereafter.

Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence by 09.30am they will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.

If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence they must inform the Head Teacher.

Holidays During Term Time

There is no automatic right to request or take time off during term time. The Education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibit the Head Teacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
- Reasonable time for travelling will be considered for these events.

Parents/carers must always make any request for absence during term time using the exceptional circumstances application form available from the school office, and provide any supporting evidence. Parents/carers must allow the Head Teacher sufficient time to respond to the application.

The Head Teacher will consider every request individually but the following will definitely not meet the criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in UK/abroad

- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends who have different school term times/holidays

If a child's unauthorised absence is 10 sessions or more over a six (6) month period the local authority may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child or prosecute parents/carers in the Magistrates Court.

Sanctions

Penalty notices require each parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a penalty, currently £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.

If despite penalty notices being issued a parent/carer continues to take their child/children out of school during term time, the matter may then be taken before magistrates under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where the Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which could include a maximum fine of up to £1000.

Medical/dental appointments

Parents/carers are encouraged to make these appointments outside of school hours if possible.

Absence from school for the above will be considered as an authorised absence; however parents/carers are required to provide written confirmation of the appointment when requesting time off.

External examinations

Absence from school for the above will be considered as an authorised absence; however parents/carers are required to provide written confirmation of the examination when requesting time off.

Monitoring and Reporting

All absences both authorised and un-authorised will be communicated to parents/carers at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

Attendance data will be collected on a regular basis and evaluated; the results will be discussed with the EWO where it is deemed necessary.

It is the responsibility and duty of the Head Teacher to ensure all unauthorised absences are recorded and reported to the EWO and Local Authority.

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Approved by the _____ committee:

Date:

Approved by Governing Body:

Review Date:

Policy Monitoring And Review (To Include Sub-Committee)

This policy will be reviewed annually by -----

Authorisation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ML', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Signed by

(Chair of Governing Board)

Approved by Governing Body:

Review Date:

See Also:

Appendix A – Absence Letter example

Appendix B – Punctuality Letter example

Appendix C – Exceptional Absence Request Form

Appendix D – Absence Request Reply Letter example

Glossary of Terms

SENDCo – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

SMSA – School Meals Supervisory Assistant

LA – Local Authority

C&SI – Curriculum and School Improvement