

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



## **Introduction -**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full education, which maximises the opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school, so that each pupil is able to realise his/her full potential.

All children between the ages of 5 and 11 are legally required to be educated.

Pupil, parents and carers, teachers, support staff and governors all have a role in maintaining a high standard of attendance and punctuality.

**Every lesson counts!  
Even casual absence can affect your child's attainment.**

## **Aims of the Policy -**

- To improve the overall Attendance of pupils at the school.
- To develop and maintain a comprehensive framework which clearly sets out the agreed roles and responsibilities for pupils, parents and carers, teachers, support staff and governors and their involvement in maintaining pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and responding to attendance data.

## **Encouraging good attendance and punctuality -**

**Whole school activities will raise the profile of attendance and punctuality through:**

- Newsletter publishing each class totals
- A wide range of rewards for the class with the most improved attendance weekly and over time.
- Certificates for children with 100% attendance each term and at the end of the school year.

## Communicating with parents –

**It is essential the parents/carers of pupils understand the school's Attendance Policy and their role in ensuring their child has good attendance.**

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school on time each day.
- Parents/carers must contact the school in person or on the telephone to provide an explanation on the first day their child/ren are absent.
- A leaflet will be sent to all parents/carers giving a brief outline of the school's Attendance Policy, the school's expectations of them and the general importance of good attendance. This leaflet will be given to all new parents/carers in the future.

## Recording Attendance Data -

### Registers:

- The registers are marked at 9:00am at the beginning of the morning session and then again at 1.30pm the beginning of the afternoon session. Registers close at 9.10am and 1.40pm respectively.
- Registration is broken into 2 sessions daily, each session requiring registration. A mark / (am) and \ (pm) is used to indicate present.
- All authorised absences must have the correct code entered with an explanation. The codes are provided in each register.
- All lateness must be marked with an L. If a pupil arrives after 9.15am **without an acceptable explanation**, it is marked with U and considered an unauthorised absence.
- If a staff member other than the Class Teacher receives information about attendance or lateness, they are to inform the Attendance Officer.

### Absence -

An authorised absence is when a pupil is away for a reason acceptable to the school. **The school** (not the parent) determines whether an absence is authorised after receipt of verbal or written explanation from the parent/carer. Explanations from pupils or siblings are not acceptable.

### Unauthorised absence -

**The school will follow up on all unauthorised absences, communicating parental responsibility for providing explanations:**

- First day telephone calls
- Unauthorised absence letter

## **Term time leave -**

**Leave of absence inclusive of holiday extension, is not permitted during term time:**

- Special Leave of absence can be authorised by the Head Teacher. Longer periods of absence may only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances and subject to evidence being produced.
- Any leave of absence for medical appointments or religious observations that are longer than a morning/afternoon/a day will go to the Head Teacher for consideration.
- If a parent/carer feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child out of school for leave of absence, they must write to the Head Teacher in advance, for consideration.
- Each case will be considered individually based on the nature of the event, history of term time absences, current attendance, age, achievement and time of year with respect to the curriculum. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision.
- Any time taken without the school's authorisation, or any additional time taken over and above the amount authorised will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a pupil does not return on the agreed date, the school will make every effort to contact the family by telephone. If no contact can be made, or if the absence has been extended for anything other than unavoidable circumstances, the school will refer the family to The Education Welfare Service part of the Early Help Services if they do not return within 10 school days. If no contact is made with the family by Early Help Services then a letter will be sent to the parent/carer informing them that the pupil is taken off roll. This will always be done in consultation with Early Help Services.
- If a child's absence warrants it, the school may refer to the Early Help Service and seek their intervention. Children who have more than 10 unauthorised Absences within a half term period (an average of 6 weeks), may be served with a Fixed Penalty Notice by The Education Welfare Service part of the Early Help Service, resulting in a fine of £60.00 per parent per child in the first instance. Prolonged non-attendance may result in court action being taken by the Education Welfare Service.
- Every attempt will be made by the school to meet with the child's parent/carer should their attendance become a cause for concern.

## **Punctuality -**

**Children can go to their classroom at 8:45am when the school door is opened.**

- If pupils arrive after 9:00am they will be recorded as late by the Attendance Officer, who is situated at the front of the school.
- If your child has not arrived at school by 9.15am, the Attendance Officer will check to find out why they are not at school. If they arrive after this time it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a child is known to come to school by themselves and has not arrived by the time the register has closed, the Attendance Officer will call parents/carers to find out why the child has not arrived at school.
- All parents of children who are absent on the register are phoned by the Attendance Officer if there has been no communication from the parent or carer.
- A late letter will automatically be sent to parents/carers if there is regular lateness.

## **Monitoring attendance and responding to patterns of absence**

**The Attendance Officer will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges. A traffic light system is in place which monitors all attendance and enables close monitoring of patterns.**

### **GREEN = Good! Keep it up!**

All pupils with 96% to 99% attendance or higher will be rewarded with a certificate to bring home. Those at 100% will have their name on a role of honour displayed in the heart of the school and be part of the 100 club enjoying an end of termly treat afternoon.

### **AMBER = Worrying**

Attendance between 91% and 95% would raise concerns for pupils' progress and parents will be alerted with an amber letter and registration certificate which may help to identify patterns of absence which we could address.

### **RED = Serious Concern**

For attendance which falls below 91%, parents will receive a red letter outlining absences for the term, and highlighting the serious impact that this will have on progress if it continues.

Those at 100% will have their name on a role of honour displayed in the heart of the school and be part of the 100 club enjoying an end of termly treat afternoon.

The school is responsible for initial interventions. When a pattern of poor attendance emerges, a discussion is needed between the Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher /SENCo to determine a course of action. If Attendance Officer makes initial contact with a parent/carer and there is no improvement, the Head Teacher and SENCo must be informed and will arrange to contact a parent/carer.

If there is still no improvement after suitable interventions by the school, the Education Welfare Officer part of the Early Help Team, may become involved.

Although all cases are considered individually, the Education Welfare Officer will generally become involved when a pupil's attendance causes concern.

To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified, the Education Welfare Officer will meet with the Head Teacher and The Attendance Officer each half term to discuss and agree a course of action for all pupils with attendance below 90%. The agreed action may include:

- Closely monitoring the situation
- A letter from the school
- A parental contract
- A meeting with the school (possibly with the Education Welfare Officer present)
- A formal referral to The Early Help Team (which can include home visits, referrals to outside agencies and statutory action)

A series of standard letters are available to be sent to parents/carers. These will be sent out by the Attendance Officer.

### **Supporting the reintegration of pupils after extended absences**

All pupils who return to school after an extended period of absence need to be supported. Each case will be considered individually and a plan will be drawn up to best support the pupil's academic and social integration into the school.

## **Taking pupils off roll**

- All pupils who leave St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to attend another school (except secondary school transfers) will remain on roll until their admission to another school is confirmed.
- In the case of pupils who disappear (i.e. leave with no indication of where they are going or whether they will return), the school will make every effort to contact the family on the telephone and in writing. If contact cannot be established, the school will make a formal referral to Early Help Services.