

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance (Children) Policy 2021



Version	Date	Action
1	September 2018	Policy updated to reflect "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018) L Denton
2	September 2018	Reviewed
3	January 2021	Reviewed

Mission Statement

***"learning, growing, belonging...
happy together in God's family"***

St Joseph's is a school community where we:

- promote Christian values of love, care and respect
- equip our children with the tools of learning and help them to achieve their maximum potential
- create an atmosphere of faith in which we share and celebrate our Catholic beliefs
- work in partnership with the children, their families and the parish
- provide a happy and safe environment in which all members of the school community feel valued
- develop the individual needs of our children to give them the confidence to participate as responsible citizens of the future

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

St Joseph's values all children and believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

St Joseph's work closely with the Attendance Team at the Local Authority to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to help families resolve any difficulties.

Legal framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, through verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

Parents will be contacted by the School Office Manager of those children who are not accounted for at registration. This information will be shared with the Headteacher who will take appropriate action where necessary.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness:

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/dental appointments:

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

Other authorised circumstances:

This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package

Exclusions:

Exclusion from school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family holidays and extended leave

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday in term time. Parents do not have a right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year and face legal action been taken against them

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing by the Headteacher. The request should state;

- Reason for request
- First date of absence
- The expected date of return

Parents should be aware that they **MUST** contact school should any delays occur, and that the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

Permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and if the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.

Religious observance:

St Joseph's acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Late arrival:

Registration begins at 9.00am but the doors open at 8.50am for children to begin the day's learning. As the children enter class they begin mental mathematics immediately while the housekeeping is carried out by the class teacher. Children arriving after 9.00am will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late.

Unauthorised absence:

Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- "couldn't get up"
- Persistent illness that is not covered by medical evidence
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school.

Roles and responsibilities:

St Joseph's believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, children and the wider school community. As such, the Governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure there is a named person to lead on attendance within the school
- Ensure the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site.

- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The school will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to children and their parents
- Form positive relationships with parents and children
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. With good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all children to attend and to achieve
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site are implemented.

Request that parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance with the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow up this with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the head teacher in advance of booking the holiday

Pastoral Care

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/ separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. Please speak to your child's class teacher.

St Joseph's also recognise that some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those children with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and children
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Time limited reduced timetables
- Reintegration support packages
- Reward systems

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occur St Joseph's and Warrington LA Attendance Team will consider the use of legal sanctions.