

	<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
	<b>Name of School</b>	<b>St. Joseph's Catholic Primary</b>
	<b>Policy review Date</b>	<b>Autumn 2021</b>
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	<b>Who reviewed this policy?</b>	<b>Governors</b>

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## 1. Aims of the Policy

St. Joseph's School aims to promote, among pupils and their parents, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance. Success at school starts by being present and punctual if children are to obtain maximum benefit from the many opportunities the school provides. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Absences can also affect a child's relationship with other children and his or her ability to form lasting friendships. It can affect a child's confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

We will work with parents to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted on as soon as possible.

The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law. In the event of regular unauthorised absences, a penalty notice may be issued by the Educational Welfare Department. An offence is not, however, committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The pupil was absent with agreement of the school.
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note (or phone call, or personal contact) in explanation does not in itself oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. If, after investigation, doubt remains then the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

## 2. Educational Welfare Service

Local Authorities are charged in law with enforcing school attendance where pupils of compulsory school age are concerned. It is important that Local Authorities are informed of attendance problems. Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) should be consulted where schools are experiencing difficulties in determining whether absences are justified.

## 3. Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Tell their class teacher or the school office of any problem that may hinder them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child attends daily and on time.
- Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and/or their child in school.
- Telephone or email the school on the first day of any absence by 9:15am to inform the School of the reason for absence.
- If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to ensure an improvement.
- Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence.
- Complete a request for leave of absence form for any term time absence prior to the proposed absence dates. Please click on the following link to download the [Leave of Absence Form](#) from the school website.

The Governing Body will:

- Be responsible for the monitoring of overall attendance, ensuring that the school's attendance figures remain high.
- Ensure the policy is carried out effectively.

The Head Teacher will:

- Monitor attendance, and contact parents if attendance is causing concern.
- Consider requests for authorised absences.
- Ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported which impact on attendance (e.g. bullying/behaviour).
- Ensure parents are advised of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new parents.
- Remind parents regularly in newsletters of the importance of good attendance and timekeeping.
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies with a 'top class' weekly certificate and an attendance section in the monthly newsletter.
- Reward attendance with over 97% and 100% attendance certificates each term.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Follow a **'First Day Calling Procedure'**.  
Parents or carers will be contacted if they have **not** reported their child's absence to the school office by 9:15am on the first day of absence. Refer to page 4. – Responding to Non-Attendance Without a Notified Reason.
- Record attendance data accurately using agreed codes.
- Record late arrivals and reasons.
- Ensure reasons for absence are recorded accurately and investigate reasons for absence.
- Prepare standard letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored.
- Meet with the Head Teacher reporting attendance issues and taking the agreed action.
- Provide attendance reports when requested and ensure DfE attendance returns are accurate.
- Oversee day to day attendance where there is cause for concern, working closely with the Education Welfare Officer to improve pupil attendance.
- Print official registers.

Class Teachers will:

- Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable learning for all pupils.
- Register pupils at the start of each morning and afternoon session.
- Alert the SLT of any children demonstrating an unsettled pattern of attendance.
- Report percentage attendance at parent consultations.
- Work with the Senior Leadership Team to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance issues

## 4. Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Examples of Authorised Absence:

- Illness.
- Hospital/dental/doctor appointments for the pupil which cannot be made outside of school hours.
- Visits to prospective new schools.
- External exams or educational assessments.

- Attendance at funerals of close family members/bereavement.

#### Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Holidays.
- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park.
- A birthday treat.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Looking after other children/family members.
- Medical appointments for other family members.
- Truancy.
- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.

## 5. Absence Procedures

Our arrangements for the notification of absence and seeking approval for absence:

Reporting absence (excluding school holidays)

- On the first day of their child's absence, parents / are asked to telephone the school on 01708 220277 or email [office@st-josephs.havering.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-josephs.havering.sch.uk) by 9.15am.
- If it is unclear how long the child will be absent from school parents are asked to contact the school daily to record the absence.
- Absences of 5 days or more must have medical evidence.
- If a student is absent prior to or does not return to school after a school holiday (half term, Christmas, Easter or Summer) the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence to cover the absence. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and as such this will be referred to the EWO.

Children's absences will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and a school letter will be prepared and sent if absence becomes a concern. If a child has persistent absence, the Educational Welfare Service will become involved. Parents may be invited in to discuss their child's attendance and the case possibly referred to the school nurse.

## 6. Responding to Non-Attendance Without a Notified Reason – First Day Calling Procedure

Guidance from the local authority about absence without a notified reason is as follows:

- Within the first hour on the first day of absence, call the contact list at least twice.
- If no reply at all, from anyone on the contact list for the child  
Does the child have additional agency support, such as a social worker? Contact them.  
Is there any in school intelligence, does anyone know the family?
- Make a prompt home visit.
- If there is no answer when we make the home visit, refer immediately to Children's Services / MASH / Police - request a welfare call.

## 7. Illness and Medical/Dental Appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
- Parents are asked to inform the school in advance if their child has a medical Appointment.
- Children should attend school around the appointment wherever possible.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unless they are collected by an adult
- If your child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last symptom. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- In the case of repeated absences, the school will require written evidence of why a child has been absent. The member of the school office will request this when it is required.
- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school will request parents to provide medical evidence to support the illness. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness or medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and parents will be advised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc.

## 8. Holidays During Term Time

Government regulations make it clear that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child for a family holiday or extended leave during term time. Any application for leave must be in 'exceptional circumstances' and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. As a school we are bound by this guidance and the Head Teacher is no longer able to authorise any holiday during term time.

### Exceptional Circumstances

The school defines the term "exceptional" as an occasion that cannot be planned for, so anything that can be planned e.g. all family holidays, weddings, family birthday parties or surprise trips booked by relatives, etc. will not be authorised.

If you decide to allow your child to be absent without authorisation this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a fixed penalty of £60 (or more) per parent may be issued by the Local Authority.

## 9. Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent' absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can be doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached this mark or is at risk of moving towards this mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed immediately. These pupils are monitored and supported carefully by the Attendance Officer, in consultation with the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer. We also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects pupil outcomes. Meetings are arranged with the parents, the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer if attendance does not improve and an action plan is agreed.

## 10. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, he or she can miss work or important information. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and may feel embarrassed. This can encourage absence.

## 11. The School Day

The school day starts at 8.55am and the doors open from 8.45am. Registers will be taken at 8.55 am. If your child arrives at school after the gates are closed at 8.55am, you will need to bring them into the school office and sign the late book, putting a reason why your child is late. Lateness is monitored closely.

Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 8:55am will be marked late. Figures of lateness will appear on school reports. Children arriving one half hour after registration will lose their mark and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The school monitors punctuality closely and will invite parents/carers in for a meeting if children are regularly late. The Education Welfare Service also become involved in cases of persistent lateness.

## 12. Registration

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers must show whether an absence of a pupil is authorised or unauthorised. All absences are shown on school reports and attendance information is passed on to secondary schools.

Accurate registration and the preservation of security of registers are the responsibility of the Head Teacher. Registers may be needed as evidence in court where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences and inappropriate authorisation of absences could compromise proceedings.

Registers will be maintained and completed in the school data management system, SIMS.net.

## 13. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until we are satisfied that an alternative school or alternative provision has been found. The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school.

If a family is moving abroad, we request that they provide a new home / school address. If a family is unsure of the new school that the child will be attending, we ask that the family provide an email address, at least one contact telephone number.

## 14. Home Educated Children

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at a school.

## 15. Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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 supervised 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/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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend



<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day