

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

This General Attendance Policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually.

Mission statement

As a Catholic School we value the special identity that God's love has created in each of us.

The Gospel inspired values of trust, honesty, self-respect, self-discipline and forgiveness are at the heart of our everyday loving and caring for one another.

All our curriculum activity reflects these principles as we search faithfully for excellence.

Together with parents, families, the church and the community, we encourage each individual to develop their God given talents and skills and realise their unique potential.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to live in the way Jesus wanted. He told us to "Love One Another as I have loved you."

Aims and Principles of Good Attendance

- The school is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and education achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school
- Dads, mums and carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels.
- School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance. Teachers praise children for punctuality and attendance; making this a positive issue in class.

Statement of Expectations What the school expects of the pupils:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.
- To be on the school yard, ready to enter school when the doors open at 8.50a.m.

What the School expects of dads, mums and carers

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend. This could be via the class teacher, telephone or text service provided by the school
- To contact the Class Teacher, Head Teacher, Attendance Lead, Learning Mentor or Safeguarding Officer, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school

- To inform the Class Teacher and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- To ensure the continuity of the children's education by taking holidays during school holiday period and in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, to request leave in term time by completing a 'Leave of Absence' form in advance of the absence.

What dads, mums, carers and pupils can expect of the school

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problems notified.
- Close liaison with the EWOS to assist and support mums, dads, carers and pupils where needed.
- Notification to dads, mums or carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports home.
- A written response to requests for leave of absence.
- An invitation to an attendance panel where any support needed can be identified.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES Registration Procedure

- Registration begins at 8.55 each morning and 1.00 in the afternoon.
- School doors open at 8.50 a.m.
- Teaching Assistants/Class Teachers should insert a mark in the register for EVERY pupil. If a child is not present when the register is called, a red circle should be marked and the letter inserted at a later time. (See list of symbols)
- The registers close at 9.00a.m. and should be sent to the office. Any child arriving after that time shall be deemed late. If they have not already done so, they should report to the main office where their name will be put in the late book and a late mark (an L in the red circle) will be inserted in the register by the Attendance Lead or Learning Mentor. The child should also pass on details of their lunch arrangements (i.e. whether they are having dinners or sandwiches) to the appropriate person.
- If a child arrives after 10.15 a.m, and does not have a valid reason, a 'U' will be entered in the circle and this will be classed as unauthorised.

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- The registers should be sent to the office immediately after morning and afternoon registration.
- Should a telephone message be given on the first day of absence, a small written note should be put in the back of the register, stating the date, child's name, who gave the message and who received it. However, if a message is passed to a teacher in the yard, for example, there is a form in the back of the register to record the contact made regarding absent children. This form will also be used by the Attendance Administrator so that the class teacher can see at a glance the action taken regarding the absence.
- If no message is received, the Attendance Lead will telephone or text

dads, mums or carers on the first day of absence. However, if telephone contact is not possible and school has not been informed of any reason for the absence, the EWO will be asked to make a home visit on the third day of absence.

As mentioned above, the registers close at 9.00 and should be sent to the office. Any child arriving after that time shall be deemed late.

o Report to the main Staff Room where their name will be put in the late book and a late mark (an L in the red circle) will be inserted in the register by the Attendance Administrator.

When children arrive late, the greeting should be a positive welcome; emphasising to dads, mums, carers and children that late attendance is preferable to absence.

A reason for the lateness should try to be ascertained and entered in the late book, together with the time of arrival.

The mum, dad or carer bringing the child to school late should be met at the Reception area by a member of the school staff (Secretary, Head Teacher, Attendance Lead or Learning Mentor etc.), details of lateness noted and the child, depending on circumstances or age, should be taken or sent to his/her class. Thus ensuring that the dad, mum or carer is not interrupting the Class Teacher whilst teaching is taking place. This procedure to take place bearing in mind St. Joseph's School Open Door Policy of welcoming parents in school.

o The child should also pass on details of their lunch arrangements (i.e. whether they are having dinners or sandwiches) to the appropriate person.

o If a child arrives after 10.15a.m. and does not have a valid reason, a 'U' will be entered in the circle and this will be classed as unauthorised.

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The school's responses to dealing with persistent lateness are

- Verbal requests to improve punctuality will be made by the Attendance Lead, Learning Mentor, or Class Teacher to dads, mums or carers.

- If there have been more than 3 late marks, Late Letter 1 will be sent out.

- Punctuality will be monitored closely and if no improvements have been made, Late Letter

2 will be sent and the matter passed on to the EWO.

If no improvement in punctuality is made, dads, mums or carers will be requested to meet with the attendance panel.

- Good punctuality will be recognised by Class Teachers in the way of praise. Praise will also be mentioned during Assemblies and Golden Book etc.

Dealing with Absence Notes

- Dads, mums or carers will be made aware of the requirement to contact school on the first day of absence and to provide a note on the first day of return from absence by means of a letter outlining information regarding attendance sent out at the beginning of the new school year.

- Class Teachers/Teaching Assistants or the Attendance Lead will deal with absence notes and enter the appropriate symbol in the register. Where pupils have brought a note giving a justifiable

reason for absence, the Attendance Lead, Class Teachers/Teaching Assistants may authorise the absence by using the appropriate symbol in black ink.

Where a verbal message has been given for reason of absence, a small comment should be placed on the absence monitoring form at the back of the register.

- Guidance should be sought from the Head Teacher if there is any doubt as to whether to authorise the absence.
- If no information is available or forthcoming regarding a pupil's absence, it will remain unauthorised unless a justifiable reason is obtained.
- When a child is absent due to a medical appointment, we need to see the appointment card/letter confirming attendance at a medical appointment. Mums, dads and carers are to ask GP's to confirm their attendance in writing.
- Home contact will be made by the Attendance Lead.

The School's Response to Attendance Issues

- The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern and will advise mums, dads and carers of attendance in terms of days rather than percentage.

For children who have problem attendance, the Learning Mentor works with the children and their families. Appropriate strategies will be employed in order to address the attendance of individual pupils.

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- The school will record all attendance related incoming messages from parents, notify the Class Teacher and place copies in registers.
- The school will contact home on the first day of absence in cases where no satisfactory reason has been received to explain a pupil's absence.
- When a pupil is absent and contact cannot be made by telephone or text, the Attendance Lead will request the EWO to make a home visit on the third day of absence.
- If the child is back in school within two days and no reason for absence has been given, a letter will be placed in the register for the class teacher to send home with the child.
- If no response to the letter is received, further letters will be sent.
- Where the school has repeatedly failed to contact the home or poor attendance persists, the school will discuss this with the EWO.

School and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The school will respond to any areas of concern identified.

- Parents of children identified as having falling attendance or repeatedly low attendance, despite work being carried out in the school and with the EWO will be invited to an Attendance Panel. This will be a supportive measure but could eventually lead to fines being issued if attendance does not improve and targets met.

Rewards and Targets

- The class with the best weekly attendance will have the attendance mascot in their class for the week.
- There will be a permanent display regarding attendance, making class attendance a little competitive. Because of the competition, teachers will need to encourage children to be kind to the child who has been absent.
- A picture of the attendance mascot will be placed on the best attendance pictogram for the appropriate class.
- Attendance will be announced in Assembly each week.
- The reward system will be reviewed annually.
- An attendance target of 95% for all children is standard. However, where attendance is particularly poor and there are issues involved, SMARTER targets will be discussed with these children. Children will be made aware of their targets and monitored by the Learning Mentor. (Parents and Staff will also be included in the target setting.)

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Requests for Leave of Absence

- From September 2013, Government legislation states that Head Teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise any holiday taken in term time. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulation-s-amendments>

- The decision for authorising Leave of Absence is the Head Teacher's. Leave of Absence will not be authorised if the holiday will take the child's attendance below 95% or where attendance is causing concern. No holiday will be authorised at the beginning of the school year or during SATS week.
- The school must communicate the decision regarding the leave of absence to the parent in writing.

Where there is conflict regarding a decision or attendance and punctuality is causing concern, the matter will be taken to the Governor's Attendance Panel.

Involvement of Dads, mums or carers

It is vitally important that parents are actively engaged in promoting good attendance. St. Joseph's involves parents in attendance matters by

- Outlining the expected attendance figures in the home/school agreement.

- Issuing all new pupils with a starter pack containing the home school agreement, the School Prospectus, An Arrive on Time leaflet and a Learning Mentor leaflet promoting good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance figures are included in the weekly newsletter.

- The school will react positively to any parental concerns. Parents will be encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their children's attendance.

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Reintegration into School After Absence

- The school will support pupils returning to school after a long period of absence.
 - School staff and EWOs will liaise closely on this issue and employ appropriate reintegration strategies, incorporating Pastoral Support Programmes, Individual Education Plans and EWS Parenting Contract Forms (EWS3) as required.
 - Looked After Children will be supported following significant disruption to their education by implementing a Personal Education Plan. Pupils could be referred to the Get Real Team for support with reintegration, where appropriate.

Children entering and exiting the school role

See Roles and Responsibilities for Senior Management, the Attendance Lead and the Learning Mentor.

ATTENDANCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance is the Head Teacher.
 - Develop, monitor and regularly review the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
 - Produce and distribute attendance information for Dads, mums or carers.
 - Set and monitor targets for improving attendance within school, including improving attendance with the Developing Excellence Plan.
 - Evaluate targets through the Senior Leadership Team of the school.
- Support all staff in their work related to attendance.
- Work with the Attendance Administrator to collate attendance data for the DfES, LA and Governors.
 - Liaise with the LA over attendance targets and school strategy.
 - Identify individual pupils with known punctuality/attendance problems and ensure these pupils are monitored closely.
 - Refer pupils to the relevant officer when attendance gives severe cause for concern, and be aware of strategies being used with these pupils and their families and ensuring support for these strategies within school. • Liaise with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance.

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- The Head Teacher will advise the school Secretary, Attendance Administrator and Learning Mentor of any forthcoming admissions to the school.
- The Head Teacher will advise the school Secretary, Attendance Administrator and Learning Mentor of any children leaving the school.
- Keep Governors updated of attendance issues. Class Teacher and Teaching Assistants

These are important roles within the school attendance procedures and requires the Teacher/Assistant to

- Complete registers accurately, ensuring that a line or a circle is entered into the register for every child, and return as soon as possible to the school office.
- Have regular discussions with pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Collect reasons for absence from pupils i.e. absence notes and, where a message is verbal, complete the reason for absence form at the back of the register.
- Be aware of individual as well as whole class attendance. Where appropriate encourage whole class/peer support for pupils who may be experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher, Attendance Administrator or Learning Mentor regarding any queries surrounding absence, e.g. no note, odd reasons etc.
- Ensure that Attendance Letter 1 (in a brown envelope) from the Attendance Administrator to Dads, mums or carers, which are placed in the register, is given out to pupils or their parents. Where there is a reason for the teacher not giving the letter out, the Attendance Administrator should be advised as soon as possible.
- Should the Teacher or Teaching Assistant be aware of the reason for absence or lateness, they should enter the correct symbol in the register and put a note on the form in the back of the register.

Attendance Support Team

- Check the answer phone every day before first day calls are made.
- Check that registers are completed using the correct codes.
- Check the attendance monitoring form in the back of the register for messages from the class teacher/assistant.
- Telephone or text dads, mums or carers on the first day of absence when pupils are absent without notification.

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- If no response/ contact is received by the third day of absence, the EWO will be requested to do a home visit.
- If the child is back in school within two days and no reason for absence has been given, Absence letter 1 will be placed in the register for the class teacher to send home with the child.
- If no response to the letter is received, further letters will be sent.
- The Attendance Lead or Learning Mentor will always try to see Dads, mums or carers during meet and greet time.

- If there is no reply to Absence Letter 1 within 2 days, Absence Letter 2 will be sent out. This letter will be posted to the child's home address by the person monitoring attendance. The Class Teacher will be informed that the letter is being sent.
- If there is still no response, and cases have been investigated i.e. checking overall attendance percentage and pattern of attendance, concerns of the teacher etc, the matter will be discussed with the EWO .
- Copies of all letters sent out will be attached to SIMS.
- Telephone The Get Real Team when a Looked After Child is absent. The allocated Social Worker will be contacted when a child on the Child Protection Register is absent.

The Attendance Administrator will meet the EWO every two weeks. Consult with the EWO on pupils entering and exiting the School Roll.

- The Attendance Administrator will monitor individual, sibling and class attendance. For children who have problem attendance, the Learning Mentor works with the children and their families.
- A permanent attendance display in the hall showing weekly class attendance.
- Send letters to Dads, mums or carers acknowledging improved attendance and punctuality.
- Letters advising of pupil's attendance will be sent during the Spring Term.
- When a child is changing school, the Office Manager will contact the new school to check that the child has actually started there. so that the child can be removed from the admission register.
- The Attendance Administrator will advise the EWO of the change of school.
- When a child is changing school, the Learning Mentor will despatch any files to the new school after the documents have been collated by the Class Teacher.

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- Should the child not commence at the new school and the whereabouts of the child are uncertain, the Attendance Administrator will contact all known telephone number to locate the child.
- The EWO will then be informed of the situation. Children missing in education form will be completed.

The Attendance Administrator

- Will provide weekly, monthly and yearly statistical returns for the Head Teacher, DfES and the LEA (copies for the Learning Mentor and Safeguarding Liaison Officer.)
- Enter attendance details onto SIMS.
- In consultation with the Head Teacher and Learning Mentor be responsible for entering and exiting children on the School Attendance Register The Governing Body.
- Receives information from the Head Teacher on attendance.
- Will be involved in setting school targets on attendance.
- Will contribute to plans in response to where attendance is a cause for concern.

- Support the school in its efforts to raise attendance.
- Contribute to the school's strategies to improve attendance e.g. school based Non School Attendance Panel.
- Will actively use their contacts to seek out funding or sponsorship to pay for rewards for excellent attendance .i.e. CD players, places to visit, gift vouchers and transport etc.
- Will endeavour to campaign for the Government to put pressure on travel agents to reduce the cost of holidays abroad during school holidays.

The majority of absences are genuine. Children can't help being ill sometimes. Care must be taken to ensure that children and their parents understand this and that there are still rewards available even if children have been absent with genuine illness.

Every effort should be made to ensure that dads, mums and carers feel valued, helped to understand and feel that regular attendance is important – that school is a place where they want their children to be

Every effort should be made to discourage dads, mums and carers from taking holidays during term time.

This policy has been developed with parents, School Staff, EWO and Governors and will be reviewed in Summer Term 2017 in consultation with the School Council, dads, mums or carers ready for review and approval by the Head Teacher and governors.

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Reviewed July 2018

Next Review July 2019