

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

September 2023

### School Attendance Target – 96%

This Policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE and Rotherham Local Authority Guidance.

Reference to parent/carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for them.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

## **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 lives. Together with parents, families, the church and the community, we encourage each individual to develop their given talents and skills and realise their unique potential. Our Mission is to live in the way Jesus wanted. He told us to "Love One Another, as I have loved you."

## **Statement of Intent**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are committed to following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable – (a) to age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show there is a direct link between under achievement and absence below 95%.
- Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success.
- Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a team, sharing ideas and developing life skills.
- Children's social skills are similarly enhanced by regular attendance (linking to the personal development of pupils.
- Non-attenders will not only miss out on essential learning but also other social events taking place.
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education, employment and training.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (2022)'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

## **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
- Parent/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.

## **Statement of Expectations**

What the school expects of the pupils:

- To attend school regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.

- To inform school of any reasons that will prevent them from attending school.

#### What the school expects of parents:

- 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, by contacting school on 01709 710270, by 9.15am otherwise your child will be marked as unauthorised.
- Parents should continue to contact the office on each following day from their child's first absence to provide an update to ensure their child's attendance is recorded accurately
- If your child has a medical appointment, evidence is required to be shown to the school office through either emailing the school email account on [school@rsjp.org.uk](mailto:school@rsjp.org.uk) or showing evidence when the child is signed in at the office
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day (equipment, homework, packed lunch if needed)
- To inform the school and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day. Parents may be asked for proof of appointments if there are attendance concerns.
- To ensure the continuity of the children's education by taking holidays during school holiday periods, 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 Parents, 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 Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Children Missing in Education (CME) to assist and support parents/carers and pupils where needed.

- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports and letters home.
- An invitation to an attendance panel where any support needed will be identified early and actions put in place.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### The Governing Body

The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and all relevant procedures across the school. They have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Attendance Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

### The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and all relevant procedures across the school. The headteacher ensures all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures. The headteacher ensures that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence. Only the headteacher can authorise an absence using a consistent approach.

### School Attendance Officer

Led by the headteacher, the attendance officer will coordinate the schools' work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will identify attendance issues at an early stage and that support is put into place to deal with any difficulties.

### Staff (including teachers and support staff)

All staff (teaching and support) in school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality. School staff will:

- Ensure all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the attendance officer on matters of attendance and punctuality

- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

### Parents / Carers

Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels. They have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly (section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence of law. Regular attendance is essential for the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take advantage of the full educational opportunities available to them to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational progress and can sometimes affect their emotional health, well-being and social development. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance unless they can prove the child was absent due to:

- Leave being granted by school
- Sickness or any other unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious observance (authorised by the school)

### Parents are responsible for:

- Informing school on the morning of the first day if their child is absent and keeping in regular contact in instances of prolonged periods of absence
- To contact the School Attendance Officer or headteacher in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To inform the School Attendance Officer and seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day
- To ensure the continuity of their children's education by taking holidays during the school holiday periods

**As of September 2013, headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### Pupils

Pupils are responsible for attending their lessons and any agreed activities as well as arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

## **Attendance Procedure**

### Registration

- Registration begins at 8.50 am each morning and at 12.45pm each afternoon for FS2/Year 1/Year 2 and 1pm each afternoon for KS2 classes.

**Registers close at 9.20am. Children who arrive between 8.50am and 9.20am will be marked as arriving late and receive a late mark (L).**

**Children arriving at school later than 9.20am will be recorded in the register as a 'U' which equates to a session absence mark and will adversely affect their attendance percentage**

- Class Teachers will complete electronic registers on sims immediately at the start of registration and mark children as present or absent.
- The register will then be reviewed by members of the office team when registers are complete. Any missing marks will be managed by the School Attendance Officer and attendance details will be updated accordingly after listening to the school voicemail.
- We operate a first day absence call / text message if school has not been informed of the reason why a child is absent. Contact will be made with parents via Teachers2Parents or a follow up phone calls

### Responding to Lateness

- The pupil entrance will close at 8.50am
- Pupils arriving after morning or afternoon registration report to the school office where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded.
- Frequent lateness will result in an Internal Attendance Panel (ISAP) Meeting being called and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. Frequent lateness will be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into family's individual circumstances. Support will always be offered as a first option.

### Dealing with Absence

- Class teachers to enter an absence mark on the register.
- Office staff will update attendance mark with the information they have – for example, illness, holiday, medical appointment.
- If no information is available or forthcoming regarding a pupil's absence, it will remain unauthorised unless a justifiable reason is obtained.
- 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, members of SLT will make the decision as to whether a home visit will be made.
- If there is still no contact, local authority guidance will be followed.

### Monitoring Attendance

- The school uses sims to monitor and track attendance at whole school, group and pupil level.
- The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. This includes pupils who are frequently late, pupils who are persistent absentees whose attendance is below 90% and pupils whose attendance is below our school target of 96%.
- Attendance information is collated and reviewed regularly throughout the school year (every 4 weeks) and a detailed report is created at the end of each term and shared with staff and governors.
- Where a pupil's absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, the school will write to parents, and an Internal School Attendance Panel (ISPA) meeting may be called, or formal monitoring periods may be put in place.
- The school will work with Rotherham Authority and the structured system of sanctions it has (see appendices).
- School and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The school will respond to any areas of concern identified.

### Dealing with Persistently Absent Pupils

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence rates and therefore falling into the governments persistent absent category (PA) such as:

- Children in need



- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

We will use all methods available to school to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. The school will focus particularly on pupils who have low rates of attendance, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing. Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

#### Rewarding Good Attendance

We celebrate good and improved attendance and reward this through:

- Weekly class attendance winner certificates and prizes
- 100% attendance certificates for each half term
- Certificates and a voucher prize for individuals achieving 100% attendance for the whole academic year
- Publish good attendance achievements on the school website

#### What Does Absence and Lateness Look Like on My Child's School Record?

Number of Days Absent	Percentage Attendance Over a Year		Minutes Late Each Day	Lost Learning Days Over a Year
10 days absence	95%		5 minutes late per day	3 Days Lost
19 days absence	90%		10 minutes late per day	6 ½ Days Lost
29 days absence	85%		15 minutes late per day	10 Days Lost
38 days absence	80%		20 minutes late per day	13 Days Lost

47 days absence	75%		30 minutes late per day	19 Days Lost
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## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### Term-time leave

**The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term time.**

The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance % is below Rotherham Local Authority average of 95.2%.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as fixed penalty fines.

### Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

### Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

Under section 37 of the Children's and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

### Young Carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate. The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Please see the following documentation on the school website for further information:

- Attendance codes
- Rotherham Local authority pathway for schools
- Rotherham FPN code of conduct
- Rotherham Children Missing From Education policy and school's CME policy