



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2016

Attendance Policy

School Attendance Aims

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

At St Joseph's we recognise that high standards in attendance is the key to achievement at school. The school's current attendance target for 2015/16 is 97%.

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Serious Concern
100%	99.9% -98%	97.9% - 96%	95.9%-93%	92.9%-90%	Below 90%

Partnership between parents and the school

At St Joseph's we recognise that attendance is the responsibility of pupils, parents and all school staff, who will work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance so that pupils reach their potential.

Matters pertaining to attendance will be mentioned and/or agreed upon;

- within the home-school agreement;
- at induction meetings;
- in school newsletters

The whole school approach to attendance recognises the important roles of all members of the school community, including support staff and academy representatives.

School responsibilities to improve attendance

In order to achieve excellent attendance, we will adhere to our role as directed in the home school agreement. This includes:

- a high quality creative curriculum so that pupils enjoy learning and want to come to school;
- providing for the needs of all pupils, offering an inclusive environment where all can achieve success;
- following up all unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents;

The school has a duty by law to refer any absence of 2 days or more where it has been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Procedures - Parents' responsibilities

In order to achieve excellent attendance at St Joseph's we ask the parents to try to adhere to their role as directed in the home school agreement.

Parents and carers should let the school know by 9.15am daily if a child is going to be absent that day.

Parents should notify the school as soon as possible of when a pupil will return to school. This will allow for any necessary preparations on the part of the school and will help to monitor the return of pupils who may truant.

Only the Principal can authorise absence at St Joseph's, and parents should apply in advance for permission for any exceptional absence.

Absence from school affects the child's educational/social and personal attainment. The school therefore expects family holidays to be taken during school holiday periods. All holidays are classed as unauthorised.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Education Investigation Service will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 Section 444.

If a child is going to be absent from school, if possible, parents are requested to give notice of this in advance.

Examples of this would include:-

- Medical/Dental appointments
- Pre arranged visits or other appointments

We would hope that where possible parents arrange dental/medical appointments during holidays or before or after school.

Holidays during term-time

The Government's Department of Education (DfE) have made amendments to the education regulations with effect from September 2013. Holiday request forms are no longer available and the Principal cannot authorise holidays during term-time.

If a child requires Leave of Absence due to extenuating circumstances, this can be requested by parents using our Leave of Absence Form. Requests will be considered by the Principal.

However, if after considering whether these are exceptional circumstances and the school does not agree the absences and a parent decides to take the child out of school, then the school may record this as unauthorised absence. This could result in a fixed penalty fine being issued by the local authority and as a result parents may be fined in respect of each parent and each child, payable up to £120 for each. Therefore two parents and two children could potentially receive fines amounting to a maximum £480.

If parent/s choose not to pay the fine the local authority may take legal proceedings against the parent/s.

Pupil's responsibilities

Pupils should:

- attend school regularly;
- arrive at school on time. Persistence lateness will result in action, such as a letter to parents.
- take part in lessons as required by teaching staff;
- take full advantage of all opportunities offered;
- bring any difficulties such as bullying to the attention of the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff.

Registration

Registers must be completed twice a day, in the morning and afternoon sessions. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session every day, and return their registers to the school office.

School gates open at 8.45am registration is at 8.55am if pupils are not in class by 9.15am they will be marked as a late "L". Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as 'U' which stands for 'late after register closes' and is classed as an unauthorised absence. Continual lateness will be investigated by the school. The school day ends at 3.15pm.

School registers are checked daily by the school administrator/assistant and monitored regularly by the Principal. Where a pupil has not returned to school after two days absence, the administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone. If unsuccessful the EIS may be contacted.

The school has adopted a computerised attendance procedure which will enable the school to scrutinise attendance trends.

All letters and messages received from parents relating to attendance will be held on file.

Incentives and rewards

The school recognises good and improved attendance, for example through:

- School newsletters
- Weekly attendance trophy
- Termly attendance certificates
- Yearly prize draw

Monitoring and support

The Principal and school administrator on a weekly basis monitor attendance for individual pupils, classes and year groups. The attendance rates will be communicated throughout the school community, including to academy representatives and parents as appropriate.

The school closely monitors late coming and uses a 'late book' to record instances of lateness.

A record of pupils leaving or returning to the school mid-session is maintained – parent/carer records the time of leaving and/or returning and the reason.

Absence *which causes concern*: this must be defined e.g.

- Regular lateness
- Regular absenteeism
- Any unexplained absence
- Truancy
- Attendance below 90% in a half term.

The EIS requires schools to refer pupils whose attendance and punctuality falls beneath certain standards. The school will notify the EIS of these pupils and will discuss other pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and for whom in-school strategies have been unsuccessful.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the EIS.

What the Law says about school attendance

By law all children of compulsory school age (between age 5 and 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 requires children and young people of compulsory school age to regularly attend the school at which he/she is on roll. It states if 'the parent knows that his/her child is failing to attend regularly at school without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence'. Upon conviction you may be fined up to £2,500 per parent, per child and/or up to 3 months imprisonment. If you wish further information please see [DMBC Education Investigation Service](#).

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. Staff are committed to working with parents the best way possible to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible by all children.

Date adopted by the Academy Committee: March 2016

Signed (Chair of Academy Committee): _____

Signed (Principal): _____