



ATTENDANCE POLICY

socially mistakes morally potential
confidently
Grow Learn spiritually
Love academically world
ourselves faith
others
St Joseph's
Joseph's

Date Approved	Lent 2021 (FGB)
Date Reviewed	Lent 2021
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Mission Statement:

At ST JOSEPH'S WE LOVE, LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER!

LOVE	LEARN	GROW
Love of our faith	Learn about our faith and Jesus	Spiritually
Love of Learning	Achieve our potential	Academically
Love life/the world	Learn from our mistakes	Morally
Love ourselves	Learn who we are / who I am	Confidently
Love others	Learn from others	Socially

INTRODUCTION

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.'

(School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (October 2014))

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning .Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. **A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.**

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy ensures that all in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by all.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Early Years aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Attendance Team so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. Only the headteacher can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

PROCEDURES

Our school has the following procedures in place to support good attendance:

- Registers are maintained appropriately and completed at the start of each session.
- Attendance data is maintained appropriately which details any absences or lateness.
- First-day absence procedures are in place to ensure all children are safe and attending school regularly.
- Attendance procedures and expectations are communicated to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Persistent absences and lateness is followed up.
- Not authorising family holidays taken during term time.
- Working with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- Working with County Attendance Team to support any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to Buckinghamshire LA and the DfE where requested.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining accurate registers at the start of each session.
- Informing the Headship Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the County Attendance Team.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made and informing HT / DSL where no contact is received.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home using Inventory.
- Providing attendance / punctuality reports to the Headteacher on a half-termly basis.
- Monitoring attendance where identified.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence and indicating a date for return to school.
- Wherever possible, making medical appointments outside of school hours and in any case, informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

REGISTRATION

- St Joseph's operates a 'soft-start' and therefore the school doors open at 8:30am.
- The school day begins and registers are taken at 8:45am. After this time, children must enter the school via the school office.
- Registers close at 9am. Any child who arrives after the register has been taken but before 9am is recorded as 'late before the register closed' (L). Any child arriving after 9am, must be accompanied to the school office to be signed in. They will be recorded as 'late after the register closed' (U). For the purposes of school registers, this is counted as an absence for the session.
- All registers are completed electronically and recorded in the SIMS management system.

FIRST DAY CONTACT

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reasons if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Holidays will not be authorised and parents should not under any circumstances make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the Headteacher first. Parents needing leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should make an appointment to meet and discuss this with the Headteacher in person. Leave of absence will not be authorised via email or letter. Parents of children taken out of school for unauthorised leave during term time will be issued with an Education Penalty

Notice: a £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid prosecution. The school has full support of the Governors and Local Authority on this matter.

ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home (see model letters below). There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the County Attendance Team. The County Attendance Team may issue penalty notices to parents poor attendance patterns continue despite support from the school and County Team.

Letter 1 – Below 95%

Date

Dear xxxxxxx

Child's Name Class

As you are aware, regular attendance at school, is crucial for children to make good academic and social progress. It is essential to promote good habits from an early age and for children to recognise the importance of being on time and attending school regularly.

I am writing to draw your attention to XXXXXXX's attendance, which currently stands at (INSERT FIGURE BELOW 95%).

I can see from the registration sheet that XXXX has had a period of ill-health this half term, however we believe it is essential that parents are kept informed about the impact any absence has on children's overall attendance rate.

Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance in more detail, please make an appointment to speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Letter 2 – Below 90%

Date

Dear xxxxxx

Child's Name Class

As you are aware, regular attendance at school, is crucial for children to make good academic and social progress. It is essential to promote good habits from an early age and for children to recognise the importance of being on time and attending school regularly.

I am writing to draw your attention to XXXXXXXX's attendance, which currently stands at (INSERT FIGURE BELOW 90%). It is essential that xxxx's attendance improves and we will be closely monitoring this over the coming fortnight to track any further absences.

I can see from the registration sheet that XXXX has had a period of ill-health this half term, however we believe it is essential that parents are kept informed about the impact any absence has on children's overall attendance rate – if appropriate

Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance in more detail, please make an appointment to speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Letter 3 – Below 85%

Date

Dear xxxxxx

Child's Name Class

As you are aware, regular attendance at school is crucial for children to make good academic and social progress. It is essential to promote good habits from an early age and for children to recognise the importance of being on time and attending school regularly.

I am writing to draw your attention to XXXXXXX's attendance, which currently stands at (INSERT FIGURE BELOW 85%). This is extremely concerning and it is essential that xxxx's attendance improves and I would therefore like to invite you to meet with me on XXXXXX to discuss ways we can work together.

Please confirm your attendance at the school office.

Yours sincerely

Letter 4 – Irregular Attendance

Dear

Re:xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx DoB: xxxxxx

By law parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. I am writing to you as your <son's, daughter's> attendance at school is currently irregular and therefore a cause for concern.

Following my previous letter in xxxxxx, his attendance has continued to be monitored over the last half term and is currently only xx%.

Every effort will be made to support xxx if you feel he is experiencing significant difficulties that may impact upon his attendance. Should this be the case, please contact me to discuss the matter further. In the meantime I will continue to monitor xxx's attendance for a further three weeks, during which time I expect to see a significant improvement.

Only the Headteacher has the authority to authorise absence; further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence that your child was unable to attend school with good reason.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 came into effect on 27 February 2004. Under Section 23 of this Act, the Education Act 1996 was amended with the introduction of two new subsections under Section 444 (subsections 444A & 444B) which has made it possible for Penalty Notices to be used as an alternative to prosecution in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

This means that Parents/ carers may be subject to a fine of £60.00, per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days rising to £120.00, per parent/carer, per child, if paid between 21 and 28 days, if their child is absent from school without a valid reason (i.e. the school does not approve the reason given for the absence).

Should xx's attendance remain irregular during this time I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may consider the issue of a penalty notice as an appropriate course of action.

Yours sincerely