

**St Joseph's R. C. Primary School
Attendance Policy 2018**

Mission Statement

Our mission in St. Joseph's RC Primary School is to provide a loving and caring atmosphere where everyone can reach his or her potential to the full.

We wish to foster a respect for the dignity of every person in our school community and in everything we do. We hope to:

"Act justly,
Love tenderly,
Walk humbly with our God."

The Governing Body of St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School adopted this Attendance Policy in March 2018 and it will be reviewed in March 2020.

At St Joseph's R.C. Primary School we believe that regular attendance is key to children achieving their full potential. In law every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that their child attends full-time education (section 7 of the Education Act 1996). Full time education means attendance of 190 days, 380 sessions during the school year from 1st September to 31st August.

The Education Act 1996

"It is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable – (a) to this age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise"

Parents must:

- Ensure their child attends regularly, on time and is ready to learn
- Refrain from taking family holidays in term time
- Inform school that their child is absent on the first day of absence and a note on the first day back to school. If contact is not made, school will call to establish a reason for the absence. This information is recorded for future reference
- Inform school of any relevant factors that could affect their child's attendance or punctuality
- Work closely with school and the Services for Young People to resolve any problems that may impede their child's attendance
- Provide school with up to date contact details and information regarding parental responsibility
- Support their child and be aware of any successes and achievements in school

Parents may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be carried out under the Code of Conduct which is a requirement of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 including amendments to the regulations in 2013. This will be carried out under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned.

The expectation is that all pupils' attendance is at least 95%. Anything below 90% is considered to be persistent absence.

St Joseph's Ten Tips for Parents

1. Always ring school on the 1st day of absence. Ring school on 0191 5364311.
2. Be aware of signs your child may have for not wanting to come to school and discuss these with them.
3. If your child makes excuses because they don't want to attend school, take time to listen to them. There might be an underlying problem.
4. If you are worried your child has concerns, contact school to arrange a meeting with the class teacher to discuss this.
5. Make sure your child understands you do not approve of them missing school.
6. Encourage your child to catch up on missed work as soon as possible.
7. Try to book doctors, dentist and other medical appointments out of school time whenever possible and do not book holidays in term time.
8. Take an interest in your child's schoolwork, ask them about their day and praise them when they do well.
9. Work together with your child to ensure they have everything ready the night before e.g. books, swimming kit etc. Ensure homework is completed the night before and not rushed in the morning.
10. Make sure you have plenty of time on a morning to have breakfast, take your time before the school day begins and ensure your child is not late for school. It can be embarrassing walking into a full classroom.

Attendance Procedures

Parents are required to inform school on first day of absence prior to school starting at 9am.

1st Day of Absence

The school will call or send a text message if not contacted by a parent for a reason of absence. This reason is recorded for future reference. The attendance code is then inputted onto the school computer system. Parents are expected to write a note with the reason of absence on their child's return to school.

2nd Day Absence

On the second day of absence without an explanation, the school will attempt to contact the parent / carer by telephone or text message. If this is unsuccessful, the school may contact the Local Authority.

3 Day Absence

If a child has been absent for three days without an explanation then school will contact the parent/carer by letter to their home asking them to contact the school and leave a reason. A deadline is given for their response (5 days from 1 day of absence).

6 Day Absence

If no response is made by the 6 day of absence a further letter is sent to the home of the child informing the parent/carer that the Local Authority has been notified of the unauthorised absence.

Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors attendance on a daily basis. The registers are checked for absences and first calls will be made to parents/carers if needed. The reasons of absence are logged in writing and on the school computer system. Any home visits are organised and carried out promptly. On a monthly basis every child's attendance percentage is checked. Parents whose children have 90% or below attendance will be sent a letter to inform them their child's attendance is being monitored and that their attendance is below the school and national expectations. The monthly percentages for each child are logged and used for future reference if needed.

School Initiatives

- Best attendance sticker award competition between classes
- 100% attendance – rewards are given to children who attend school every day for a term as part of the Gold Book Assembly

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The decision as to whether an absence is authorised rests solely with the school not with the parents.

All absence notes are kept in the child's individual file until the child leaves school.

Codes Used for Absences

B – Educated off Site

C – For leave of absence in term time, (exceptional circumstances only)

E – Excluded

G – Holiday or unauthorised absence in term time or in excess of period determined by Head Teacher

H – Holiday (Agreed)

I – Illness

M – Medical appointment

R – Religious holiday

V – Educational Visit

Applications from Parents for Term Time Leave

If a parent feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child on a holiday or special leave of absence in term time, they must make an application in advance. Forms are available from the school office and school requests that parents apply at least four weeks in advance of any proposed holiday or special leave.

The local authority and the national government strongly discourage schools from allowing leave for term time holidays or other reasons. While parents can be assured that each request will be considered on its individual merits, the school's practice is to only authorise holidays and leave in exceptional circumstances.

If a holiday or leave in term time is agreed, it is very important that the child comes back to school on the date agreed. Failure to return could result in the child being deleted from the school roll or legal action being taken against the parent for the unauthorised absence. The school has a duty to keep children safe and this includes knowing where they are.

If a parent withdraws their child during term time and the school has not agreed to it, this absence will be unauthorised and could result in a penalty notice (a £60 - £120 fine) or a summons to court.

Some of the issues that may be taken into account when considering any request are:

- Amount of time requested
- Pupil's existing attendance record
- Proximity of tests and other examinations
- Pupil's educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed
- General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
- Nature of the request (why it could not be taken in school holiday)
- Frequency of such requests from pupil's parent

Late Arrival Procedure

There are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the pupil themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school
- The disruption to other children in their class

All children who are late must report to the school office and give a reason of lateness. If a child is more than 30 minutes late they will be marked as 0 – unauthorised absence. If parents are aware they are going to be late with their child we expect they ring school and leave a message.

All late arrivals are monitored on a daily basis. On a monthly basis letters are sent to parents whose children are often late. The letters state – **“all late arrivals are recorded in the**

school registers and any continued pattern of lateness will be followed up.” Penalty notices could be used in cases of unauthorised absence (children who arrive 30 minutes late or more). This decision will be taken by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Local Authority.

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- Take our school’s compliments slip/details so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move

Chair of Governors: Date:

Head Teacher: Date: