

# Policy for Attendance and Punctuality

## **Mission Statement**

At St. Joseph's Catholic School, you will find us caring, hardworking and co-operative.  
We follow the ways of Jesus, using our talents and gifts to make our school special.  
We show respect to all and welcome you.

## **1 Introduction**

This policy provides local school guidance based on National and Local Authority statutory regulations and advice.

## **2 Attendance and Punctuality – Mission Statement**

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **3 Aims**

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To further develop effective partnerships with families, the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.

- To improve the overall percentage attendance and punctuality of pupils at our school.
- To recognise good and improving attendance and punctuality and to challenge poorer levels
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, providing support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.

## **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Parents**

Parents play a vital role in establishing the importance of regular attendance and good timekeeping with their children. Good habits, established early in school life, provide children with a positive attitude to being in school that has an extremely beneficial effect on their progress.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- fulfil their legal responsibility of ensuring that children attend school each day and on time
- inform school of the reason for absence as soon as is practicably possible
- ensure that children are not absent from school unnecessarily
- ensure children realise the importance of being on time and help them to be on time for school each day
- work in partnership to address any difficulties having a negative impact on attendance

### **4.2 School**

School will also emphasise the importance of regular attendance and good timekeeping, ensuring children understand the immediate benefits in relation to their progress in school and also how these habits will help prepare them for their future lives beyond school.

School has a responsibility to:

- consistently promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- fulfil legal responsibility in completion of pupil registers
- provide data to Local Authority and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
- set annual targets for attendance levels
- monitor attendance at a whole school, class and individual pupil level in order to identify early patterns of poor attendance and time keeping
- address identified difficulties with attendance and punctuality by working in partnership with parents and involving other relevant agencies
- report annual attendance figures in the school profile and prospectus

#### 4.3 **Local Authority**

The local authority has the responsibility to:

- ensure the school sets challenging targets for pupil attendance
- monitor the schools attendance and intervene if it becomes unsatisfactory
- provide support to schools and families in resolving attendance difficulties through the provision of support services

Appendix A - Procedures for attendance and punctuality at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School.  
*(These will be reviewed and revised regularly)*

Dated: September 2017

Review Date: September 2019

Appendix A

## Attendance Procedures at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

### 1. **Registration**

- \* School starts at 8.55am. Registers are taken at this time and children are expected to be in their classrooms by this time.
- \* The playground doors are locked when all of the classes have been collected from the playground at 8.55am. Any child arriving after this time should be brought to the main entrance, where they must be signed into school by an appropriate adult.
- \* Children who are not in class when the register is taken are marked as late. If they arrive after the close of register, at 9.30am, they are marked as 'late after register'. THIS IS COUNTED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.
- \* Continued lateness will be reported to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in legal action being taken, leading to a fine.
- \* If children are not in school they are marked as absent. Each session (morning and afternoon) counts as one absence so one day counts as two absence marks.
- \* Children who have not arrived in school by 9.15am will get a telephone call home to establish their reason for absence or whether they will be in school at all that day. Where reasons are not those of illness or medical emergencies, parents will be advised to bring their child into school late. If a child has an appointment, they will be asked to come in straight afterwards.
- \* If a child is absent, their name and reason for their absence is recorded in the 'first day call' book. Where an absence is not expected to be ongoing, and a parent does not call in each day, they will receive a phone call for each day of absence.

## 2. **Absence from School**

- \* Whenever possible absence from school should be avoided. If a child is absent the school should be contacted on the first morning to be given a reason why. If a child is absent and the school has not received a reason parents may receive a text message, telephone call or visit from the EWO.
- \* Dependent on the reason provided the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Illness is the main reason for authorised absence.
- \* Even if a reason has been given the **school is not obliged to authorise absence**, particularly if attendance is causing concern. (please see "poor attendance and punctuality")
- \* Medical and dental appointments should be made out of school times. When appointments have to be taken in school time, it is not necessary for a whole day to be missed, and only the actual time for the appointment will be authorised.
- \* Registers are completed showing reasons for absence and these are monitored by the school and the local authority. Unauthorised absences are monitored by the local authority and DCSF. Children with a high rate of unauthorised absence will be referred to the EWO as a priority.

## 3. **Celebrating Attendance**

- \* Attendance is monitored at class level each week. The weekly attendance statistics are published on the school newsletters, and also presented in assembly. The class with highest attendance each week earns a place on our leader board.
- \* Children who achieve 100% attendance are rewarded with a special certificate at the end of each term and year.

#### 4. **Poor Attendance and Punctuality**

- \* Apart from legal requirements, poor attendance and punctuality seriously harms children's progress in school so everything possible needs to be done to avoid it.
- \* Attendance and punctuality levels are monitored by the Head Teacher. If attendance or punctuality begins to cause concern parents will be contacted to discuss this.
- \* Each half term parents of any children with attendance near or below 85% or with poor punctuality will be written to by the Head Teacher to point out the poor levels and ask for support in improving it.
- \* If absence has been authorised reasons will be checked and attendance monitored. If we do not receive reasons for absence these will be unauthorised and will be referred to our education welfare Officer (EWO).
- \* **If a child's attendance is within the 85% area of concern or below and the reason given for absence is continually illness, parents will be asked to obtain a doctors note in order for absences to be authorised.**
- \* If absence remains low or unauthorised the EWO will write to families or visit to see if anything can be done to improve attendance and punctuality levels. (Please remember that 'late after register closed' marks count as an unauthorised absence).
- \* If poor attendance patterns continue the EWO may take court action against parents resulting in a fine.

#### 5. **Holidays in Term Time**

- \* Although we understand that there are many valid reasons that families may want to travel during term time, extended absence from school is very disruptive for children's progress and should be avoided.

- \* **There is no entitlement to holiday during term time and the school is not obliged to authorise absence whether notified or not.**
- \* A 'Notification of Absence during Term Time' form is available from the office, to inform us of the absence of your child.
- \* We advise against taking holidays in term-time, but in the situation where it is absolutely unavoidable, please come in to see me with this form before any bookings are made.
- \* Any time taken other than in exceptional circumstances will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- \* When requests are made, the timing of the absence (e.g. is it during or near an assessment time) and the child's current attendance level will be taken into account.
- \* Whatever the circumstances the school will only consider authorising absence of up to 10 school days.
- \* If the school does not authorise time off, and families go anyway or if the school has not been directly notified of holiday this is classed as an unauthorised absence and will be referred to the EWO.
- \* If the school authorises the time off, but the children do not return to school by the agreed date their absence also becomes unauthorised and will be referred to the EWO.
- \* If children have not returned to school by the date that is agreed, their names will be taken "off roll" and they will no longer have a place at the school.

## 6. Support

- \* If there are problems with attendance and punctuality support is available to help with this.
- \* Parents can ask for support from the school and/ or the Education Welfare Service
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