



ATTENDANCE

Compliance statement

Every policy is reviewed at regular intervals and where applicable, as stipulated by law. Each policy is also available in additional formats including Braille and in additional languages upon request, within reasonable timescales as stipulated by the school.

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| Reviewer/s: | Danielle Ashley |
| Last reviewed on: | November 2023 |
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| Approved by: | Full Governing Board |

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Introduction

St Joseph's Catholic Federation is a place of excellence and we pride ourselves on ensuring that all our children succeed. We believe that good attendance plays a key part in ensuring personal development, learning and achievement in all areas. Parents, carers, and teachers and all staff have a duty to encourage maximum attendance at school.

2. Rationale

2.1 At our school we are committed to:

- a) Valuing and rewarding high attendance rates;
- b) Good practice, which encourages children to take a pride in their attendance and punctuality rates;
- c) A partnership with parents to ensure understanding, support and co-operation about high attendance rates;
- d) Encouraging children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly;
- e) Working in partnership with parents, carers, the school office staff with responsibility for attendance and the Educational Welfare Officer to address difficulties and recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance;
- f) Identifying patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and working to resolve personal/social difficulties;
- g) Following efficiently the systems for accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

3 Definitions

3.1 Authorised absence

- a) 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 guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent contacts the school to explain the absence;
- b) Only the school's Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

3.2 Unauthorised absence

- a) An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent;
- b) An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent;

4. Procedures

4.1 Children must attend school punctually and regularly. Parents and pupils new to our school should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the start and end times that apply to their children.

4.2 A general rule which will ensure that your child is always on time is for them to be in class and ready for learning by 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8.50am is late for school. Parents whose children arrive late must notify the school office. The child's attendance is then amended with the appropriate mark by the office staff. Any child arriving after 9:15am will be marked as absent for the morning session.

4.4 If a pupil is absent, parents and carers are asked to telephone the school on the first day of absence and on each day of absence until they return so that the absence is not recorded as “unauthorised.”

4.5 If we do not receive a telephone or message on any day of absence we:

- a) telephone the child’s parent or carer to ask why the child is not in school;
- b) follow this with a text to the parent if we are unable to contact the parent or carer by phone;
- c) Send an email or letter after five days to the parent or carer advising them that the absence will be recorded as ‘unauthorised’ if an absence note has still not been received.

4.6 If no response is received following these actions we notify our Education Welfare Officer (EWO). If we have previous concerns about a child’s welfare e.g. the child is on the child protection register or we believe could be in danger, we notify our EWO and/or the police or Social Services as soon as possible or at latest by the end of the first day of absence.

4.7 We clearly communicate our expectations about attendance and punctuality to all members of our schools’ community. We seek to address any emerging concerns in this respect at the earliest possible stage and work proactively, with our EWO if appropriate, to ensure that minor problems are addressed and not allowed to escalate or become entrenched. Notwithstanding this, if a significant problem emerged and no response to the usual interventions/support packages was forthcoming, we would ask for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). The local authority either for general attendance concerns or for term-time holiday issues this.

4.8 In the event that a FPN is not paid within a stipulated period, court action automatically follows and could lead to a Parenting Order and/or heavy fine being imposed the Court. However, we would do everything we could to avoid the issue of an FPN

5. Exceptional leave

5.1 Parents receive a list of holiday dates at the beginning of each academic year. These dates can also be found on the school website and are published prior to the start of the academic year. Parents are expected to take their holidays outside term time. Pupils should attend school for the maximum number of days possible since long absences can have a detrimental effect on their learning.

5.2 It is the School’s policy in line with the Department for Education regulations not to authorise any leave during term time.

5.3 Any request to remove a child during term time for a period of exceptional leave should be made to the Headteacher in writing using the “leave of absence” form provided in the school offices. (Appendix A)

5.4 We may ask for additional proof as to the reasons for absence in exceptional circumstances – for example a certificate from a GP.

6. Strategies for improving punctuality and attendance

6.1 Staff at St Joseph’s Catholic Federation are committed to doing all they can to ensure children attend punctually and regularly but closely monitor the number of authorised and unauthorised absences and the incidence of lateness in each school.

6.2 In an attempt to improve rates of punctuality and attendance we may:

- a) speak to the parents of children who are causing concern and/or our EWO;
- b) invite the EWO into assemblies to talk about the importance of attending regularly and punctually;
- c) ask the EWO to come into school some mornings to speak to persistent latecomers or to do gate checks;
- d) send an individual attendance data report to each parent/carer every year to show their child's attendance and punctuality record;
- e) keep a record of those who arrive late each day;
- f) keep a record of parents and carers who have telephoned to explain their child's absence;
- g) keep a record of parents and carers whom we have telephoned or left a message on the answering service;
- h) ensure our registers are completed accurately;
- i) print out registration certificates for each class to highlight those who are persistently late or absent;
- j) when concerns arise, print out and send to parents and carers, individual registration reports to show attendance and punctuality statistics;
- k) talk with parents and carers to identify whether support is needed for a particular problem;
- l) look at what alternative measures can be put in place to support parents and carers including access to wider support services.
- m) work in conjunction with the local authority and other agencies to support families to remove barriers to good attendance.
- n) use attendance data to target improvement efforts to the pupils/pupil cohorts most in need

7 Long-term absence

7.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home/set work on Google Classroom if requested by parent or carer, so that they can keep up with their school work.

7.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of the School's Governing Body to monitor overall attendance. They have the responsibility for this policy, and for ensuring that it is carried out.

8.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

8.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and the Attendance Officer will be responsible for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact SLT immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, SLT and The EWO will contact the parents or carers.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Everybody is responsible for improving attendance.

Appendix A – Exceptional leave request form.



Application for leave of absence during term time check list to be completed and filed before responding:

Step 1: Attendance Officer

| | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|--|
| Pupil details | | | |
| Current Attendance | | | |
| Last year's attendance | | | |
| Date request for leave form completed. | | No days requested | |
| Comments | | | |
| Signed | | Date | |

Step 2: Educational Welfare Officer

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|------|--|
| <u>Recommendation</u> | | | |
| | | | |
| Signed | | Date | |

Step 2 – Attendance Lead (AHT)

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|------|--|
| <u>Recommendation</u> | | | |
| | | | |
| Signed | | Date | |

Step 3: Headteacher

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|------|
| | | |
| Authorise issuing of fixed penalty? | Yes | No |
| Signed | | Date |