

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

*Here at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we learn and grow through the love of Jesus.
Our community is a safe, caring and happy place where everyone is supported and valued.
We encourage and challenge everyone to achieve their full potential,
spiritually, academically, morally and socially.
We inspire others with a love of learning and aim for excellence in everything we do.
Through our own faith, we treat one another the way we would like to be treated.
We help every child to be gentle and fair: to always do their best.*

'Learning through the Love of Jesus Christ'

Introduction

Here at St Joseph's we are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations of all the children. The achievement, attitude and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied needs.

St Joseph's is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its pupils and staff. The governors and staff are committed to promoting British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.

Children need to attend school every day to maximise their learning potential. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note, emails the school or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Head teacher can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. At St Joseph's parents who wish to take their child out of school must write into the head teacher explaining why the absence is necessary. The head teacher will only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances and if the child's attendance is over 90%

Unauthorised absence

Date: February 2014

Date of next review: February 2016

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

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office. The school office will then ring the parent or guardian to check the reason for absence and to check on the safety of the child. When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week before the leave of absence is required.

Parents may write in to request an absence for holidays but the legal situation states that, while a parent may request a holiday, the authorisation for that holiday can only be made by the head teacher.

Long-term absence

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, so that they can keep up with their school work.

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.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Education Welfare Officer for St Joseph's regularly visits the school to monitor lateness [with a late desk] and attendance. The head teacher follows up any advice given by the Education Welfare Officer to support children whose attendance is poor.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive a certificate for excellent attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term.

Class attendance and lateness are reported each week in the newsletter. We recognise that lateness, particularly persistent lateness has a significant impact on a child's learning.

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Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year and these are in line with attendance targets set by the department for education. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.