

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Mission Statement

To follow in Jesus' footsteps, caring for each other when we work, play and pray.

Introduction

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that all children have rights as outlined in the UN Convention. As duty bearers, we have the responsibility to respect these rights and are committed to supporting our children through their education and to ensure that they are rights-holders.

Rationale

We believe regular attendance and punctuality is important because:

- creating an attendance and punctuality ethic fosters school membership and commitment and values others and their time
- absenteeism leads to underachievement
- punctuality helps lessons begin on time without interruptions, which helps everyone to learn
- accepting lateness encourages disrespect for others
- casual absence is likely to lead and drift into more serious levels of absence
- attendance and punctuality is an aspect of achievement. Employers and other reference seekers value attendance and punctuality as indicators of reliability.

It is important for all children to regularly attend school on time irrespective of gender, religion, cultural background and ability, to ensure they make the best of their talents and skills.

We acknowledge maintaining good attendance and punctuality is a shared responsibility between parents and school, supported by the Local Authority /MAC as necessary.

Aims

- to communicate to parents the high priority placed upon good attendance and punctuality
- to ensure that all children and parents understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
- to maintain and update an attendance and punctuality noticeboard highlighting concerns and achievements
- to achieve 98%+ attendance and 100% punctuality

Organisation

Punctuality

A daily check is made on punctuality by school staff. When a child is late they are admitted through the main entrance and their name recorded in the late book. This information is then entered onto the School Information Management System and kept on the individual pupil record.

For children where there are concerns an individual punctuality report is generated, this is sent with a letter to the parents. Following this letter if there is no improvement in punctuality a meeting will be arranged, where the school will discuss what can be done to support the family.

Following the meeting if there is still no improvement a School Punctuality Review Meeting will be arranged involving Governors.

Parents/carers are welcome to discuss their children's punctuality at any time by making an appointment through the school office to see the Principal.

Certificates for 100% punctuality are awarded termly, with a special end of year certificate for achieving 100% punctuality for the academic year.

Punctuality at the end of the day is equally important. School finishes at 3.20pm. for all children. Children should be collected on time. Waiting and not knowing why parents/carers are late can cause anxiety for children especially when they see that every member of the class has been collected and has gone home.

Attendance

A daily check is made on attendance by school staff in the following way:

- Parents/carers must inform the school on the first day when a child is absent, giving the reason
- Parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence if they have not informed the school
- Absence codes are entered throughout the week for any children where reasons have been given
- Any child for whom an acceptable reason for absence has not been supplied will be marked unauthorised.

This indicates any unauthorised absences along with patterns and trends in any absences.

For children where there are concerns an individual attendance report is generated, this is sent with a letter to the parents. Following this letter if there is no improvement in attendance a meeting will be arranged, where the school will discuss what can be done to support the family.

Following the meeting if there is still no improvement a School Attendance Review Meeting will be arranged involving Governors.

Parents/carers are welcome to discuss their children's attendance at any time by making an appointment through the school office to see the Head of School / Principal. Parents/carers should contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

If a child fails to attend school for a 4-week period without authorised reason, then he/she will be removed from the school roll and the Local Authority informed of this.

It is the school who authorises absences and not the parents/carers.

What circumstances would normally be considered authorised?

- ✓ Illness that makes you really unable to come to school (not just having a cold or a bit of a headache).
- ✓ If your child keeps being ill, then he/she must see a doctor and you must bring in a medical note.
- ✓ A child with repeated patterns of illness will be referred to the School Nurse/School Doctor.
- ✓ One day for each main festival of your child's religion.
- ✓ A family crisis (e.g. a death in the family).
- ✓ One day for a very special family event (e.g. a wedding).

What circumstances would normally be considered UNAUTHORISED?

- ✗ Helping the family (e.g. looking after children, parent sick).
- ✗ Family occasions (e.g. meeting someone at the airport).
- ✗ Going shopping for shoes, clothes etc.
- ✗ Having a haircut.
- ✗ Anything which can be avoided.

The school will decide whether to authorise a child's absence. If the school thinks that the absence could have been avoided, then it will not be authorised.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence. It is not usually necessary for whole days to be taken for appointments - so children should attend for the rest of the day where possible.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Holidays in Term Time

The Government have made it law that holidays taken during school time cannot be authorised. This means that anyone who then takes their holidays during term time may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Holidays during term time have a detrimental effect on education. There is no entitlement to leave. Penalty notices may be issued to those families who do not abide by the school's decision to deny leave.

Spotlight on Attendance

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. If a child has a minimum of 10 school days (20 sessions) unauthorised absence in 12 calendar months, then the parents will be invited to attend SARM a meeting. If there is still cause for concern, then legal action may be taken. This will include:

- Issuing penalty notices – a penalty of £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. This is applicable to both parents.
- Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence
- Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence.

Attendance Percentages

Government research has shown that children's attendance relates directly to their achievements. Any attendance that is below 95% is a cause for concern. The school ask that all parents/carers aim for 100% attendance.

The school consider attendance in the following way:

100%	Excellent
99%	Very Good
96% - 98%	Good
95%	Satisfactory
Below 95%	Cause for concern

Attendance Awards

To raise the profile of good attendance and highlight its importance, class/classes with the best attendance are mentioned in our weekly newsletter and achieve a certificate with potential for a termly class prize.

Certificates for 100% attendance are awarded termly with a special end of year certificate for achieving 100% for the academic year.

At the end of each term, children achieving 100% for both attendance and punctuality are entered into a prize draw.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The impact of communication with parents – including letters sent home and discussion on patterns of attendance and punctuality are evaluated termly by the SLT, with the assistance of the Office Staff in the light of data collated.

The SLT, with the assistance of the Office Staff, will evaluate termly the effectiveness of attendance and punctuality through comments received from parents/children and the impact this appears to have upon improving attendance and punctuality.

Policy reviewed: September 2021

It is the intention to review this policy annually.