

***St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Worcester***

**'Following Jesus in all we do'**

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

Date Policy Ratified: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018  
Date for Review: May 2019

**Contact Details:**

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**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**This policy relates only to children of compulsory school age unless otherwise indicated**

**INTRODUCTION**

At St Joseph's we recognise our vocation to educate our children to enable them to take their place in society as children of God, made in His image and likeness. Missing school means missing out.

Our children need be in school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

Many children are sometimes ill or unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult.

At St Joseph's we work in partnership with our parents and any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, we work hard to sort out between the school, the parents and the child at the earliest possible stage. We always follow up absences, monitoring, supporting and always taking the necessary actions to ensure that every child is able to fulfil their right to a happy and safe education.

We encourage all parents to come and speak to us, no worry or concern is too small. It is never better to cover up children's absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

**LATENESS**

Morning registration closes at 9.05am and afternoon registration closes at 1.55pm; arrival after either of these times will result in a late mark. Persistent lateness will be followed up according to policy procedures.

**AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Every half-day absence from school will be recorded by staff at the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised Absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised Absences** are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the Headteacher in advance

**POOR ATTENDANCE**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we will contact parents to work with them to resolve attendance problems. Parents can also contact school staff. We work with families to resolve any problems together. Every case is dealt with according to the family need and concern and is nearly always successful. As a school we provide support in every way possible to improve attendance. In the case of continual difficulties after continual support and guidance, a referral has to be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

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They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceedings if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

### **PROCEDURES**

Attendance is reviewed on a daily basis and is followed up. Weekly figures are analysed by the Headteacher and termly analysis is shared with the Governing Body and actions discussed.

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is (below 94% over the school year). This adds up to missing almost half a term. These are called "persistent absentees" by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Morning registration closes at 9.05am and afternoon registration closes at 1.55pm; arrival after either of these times will result in a late mark.
- Parents need to contact the school office to report an absence and / or send in a letter upon return to school.
- Any request for absence during term time must be sent in writing to the Headteacher who will judge the circumstances and respond via a letter.
- Any decision regarding term time absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- The school will always attach up to date attendance records to any letter as part of the approval procedure.
- All unauthorised absences are rigorously followed up for explanation.

### **Term-time holiday**

It is not usually possible for the school to authorise absences for looking after other children, minding the house, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may however, be granted on compassionate grounds in an emergency (e.g. after the death of a close relative). This is always at the discretion of the headteacher.

Please note that a request for a term-time holiday is **NOT** a parental right. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances but **arrangements should not be made without the school's agreement in advance**. Taking leave without permission is "unauthorised" absence and can be subject to a Penalty Notice fine or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents are asked to make routine medical and detail appointments outside school times wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance if at all possible. A "present" mark may still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

- Where medical appointments are during school hours, parents **MUST** inform the school office in advance.
- Medical appointments resulting in children arriving late will have been marked as M.
- On arriving at school they will be marked as present for that session. Their arrival time will be noted.

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- If the medical appointment keeps them out of school all morning and they return at/after lunch they will be marked as medical absence for the morning session only.

**Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives and strategies**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- As a school, St Joseph's monitors those children whose attendance falls below 95% (94% and below)
- Letters are sent out on a regular basis to those children who fall into that category.
- The school Family support worker provides help and support to families to improve attendance
- In certain circumstances the Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher and Family Support Worker will meet with families to discuss strategies and future actions.
- If need be outside agencies are always involved

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs T Eaborn (Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker)

Mrs Kim Hunt (Office Manager)

Mrs Joanne McDonagh (Assistant Headteacher and SENDCO)

Mrs Louise Bury (Headteacher)

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy ratified by Governing Body: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Review date: May 2019