



**ST. JOSEPH'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL  
'LEARNING TO LOVE, LOVING TO LEARN'

# ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Mission Statement

St Joseph's vision is that together we are the architects of the future, building lives on the firm foundations of the gospel.

Inspired by Christian values we aim to provide love and security within a curriculum designed to meet the complex needs of all individuals, in order to prepare them to take their place in the ever-changing world of today and tomorrow.

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

There is a statutory requirement for schools to maintain attendance registers showing the attendance of pupils at each session when the school is open to pupils, and to show a distinction between ‘authorised’ and ‘unauthorised’ absence.

This school values the importance of good school attendance, recognising the impact it has on pupil performance. A child’s absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is given for absence or if the school considers the information received from a parent / carer is not an acceptable reason for absence. Parents will be informed of their child’s low attendance level and invited to discuss their child’s attendance when:

- a) A child continues to be absent for more than seven school days without explanation.
- b) A child is absent for seven school days or more with an unsatisfactory explanation.
- c) A child’s attendance drops below 90% for no specific medical or other acceptable reason.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)



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- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made



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- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am. The school offers a soft start to the day where by children can enter their classrooms on arrival to school between 8.45am and 9.00am. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.35pm. (Nursery afternoon register is taken at 12.20pm and will be kept open until 12.40pm).

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can notify the school by phone, email or log their absence on parentmail.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.



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Parents can notify the school by phone, email or log their child's absence for a medical/dental appointment on parentmail.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time to prevent disruption to their own learning and that of others. Pupil lateness will be followed up by the school with the parent or carer. Serious lateness will be recorded as unauthorized absence and will be investigated by the Education Welfare Officer, unless there is an acceptable reason. Frequent lateness may lead to prosecution of parent or carer to ensure regular attendance.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will be notified termly of their child's attendance.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as



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- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents’ leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents’ or child’s rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other i.e. on an occasion such as a bereavement

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher’s discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

All families are encouraged to avoid taking children out of school during term time. Where parents do wish to take their children out of school during term time an application needs to be completed. Please see Appendix 2 – Application for Pupil Leave in Exceptional Circumstances during Term Time.



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When a child's attendance drops below 95% a letter will be issued from the school to make parents aware and that poor attendance affects attainment. When a child's attendance drops below 90% the parents or carers will be invited to a SAP – School Attendance Panel. Following the SAP the child's attendance will be monitored – if the parents or carers fail to make sure that their child attends school regularly and punctually or who condone their child's absence without good reason, will run the risk of Legal Sanctions.

#### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

#### **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school has many approaches to rewarding good attendance. We have whole school approaches where by classes with the highest attendance and punctuality receive an award in assembly which tallies across the term. The class with the highest attendance and punctuality receive a reward at the end of the term. This has included a school trip to the London Eye.



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We also have end of year certificates for children with 100% attendance and punctuality. In addition to this we raise awareness through whole school weekly newsletters.

We endeavor to communicate with parents regularly such as during parents' evenings and our attendance officer/school admin officer will raise concerns with parents early, opening discussions and allowing progress to be made.

### 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Alternatively parents can write a note on the schools Parentmail communication system to inform the school of the reason for absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 7 school days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school collects and stores attendance data, for internal purposes – for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. Please be advised the school adheres to the GPDR policy, where individuals have a right to be informed about how the school uses any personal data that we hold about them. Please refer to the school's GPDR policy and Privacy Notice.



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## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The school has termly School Attendance Panels for families where attendance drops below 90%. The Education Welfare Officer, School Admin Officer, School Nurse and Senco/inclusion Manager are in attendance at these meetings and when appropriate the link governor for attendance.

### **7.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to refer a family to the Education Welfare Service to issue a fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMs on line.



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### **7.5 Administrative staff**

Administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection /safeguarding and GDPR policy.

**POLICY REVIEW TERM: BIENNIAL**

**Policy Reviewed:** Nov 2022

**Next Review:** Nov 2024



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**APPENDIX 1 - ATTENDANCE CODES**

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement



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Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school



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**Unauthorised absence**

<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



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**APPENDIX 2 - APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME**

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances; otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

**No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other i.e. on an occasion such as a bereavement

**Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.**

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

When completing this application, please also refer to the School's Attendance Policy.



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## APPENDIX 2 - APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

Name of pupil(s):

Class(es):

Address:

Telephone No:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From.....To.....Total school days.....

**Exceptional circumstances request:**

*(this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)*

Signature of parent/carer.....Date.....

**For school use only**

Seen by Headteacher (signature).....Date.....

Decision reached.....

Date reply returned.....