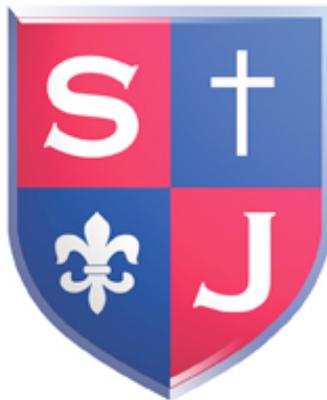


St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



ST. JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

The aims of our Attendance Policy are rooted in the school's Mission Statement

Let your faith shine through

We learn about Jesus

In your care for others

We are kind and show respect

In your achievements

We always do our best

1 Introduction

1.1 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 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.

1.2 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.

2. Everyday procedures and expectations

By following our simple procedures for attendance and punctuality, parents / carers can give their children the best chance of success at school. Setting expectations for this aspect of daily life also puts in place good personal habits for their working life.

Parents / carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that every pupil comes to school on every school day unless they are unwell.
- **If a child cannot attend school, it is compulsory that you telephone the school and a reason for absence declared**
- Ensuring that every pupil comes to school on time and is collected on time. That means being in the playground for 8.45am ready to go into school, when children will be met by their class teacher and teaching assistant and escorted to their classroom for registration.
- Ensuring that children are collected from school on time, which means being in the playground ready to collect children before 3.30pm.
- If children are not collected on time- **Late Collection Protocols are followed** (See Late Collection Protocol)
- Reporting any absence to the school by telephone by 9am on each day of absence, including the reason for absence. If you are running late you should also telephone the school. There is a voicemail system for you to leave a message.
- If pupils arrive late to school (after 9.00am), they must be escorted to the school

office by a parent / carer and signed in by the admin assistant

- Time off during term time is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. If a parent / carer wishes to request time off during term time they must follow the process in this document in advance
- Parents / carers are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. **The school does not authorise leave for holidays during term time**
- All parents / carers requesting a place for admission during the school year are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher
- At this meeting, the importance of regular punctuality & attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines

The school and its staff are responsible for:

- Knowing and keeping accurate records of which pupils are in school for each halfday session of the school term. This means using the registration process described later in this document.
- Ensuring they know the reason for any absence. This means contacting any family whose child is not in school, if no notification of absences has been received.
- Monitoring levels and patterns of absence and lateness, and discussing these with parents / carers if they become persistent.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- marking the register electronically, twice daily, and ensuring it is sent to the office on each occasion. The am register should not be sent before 9.10am. The pm register must be sent before 1.40pm.
- alerting the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Pastoral Care Manager to any concerns they have about the late coming and attendance of individual pupils.

The Admin Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- to make first day phone calls and report all concerns and reasons for absence to SLT Attendance Lead.
- Keeping and checking that all pupil, staff and visitor registers are accurate.
- Recording twice daily (am and pm) each class attendance from the registration sheets.
- recording latecomers .
- providing the details of attendance to the Headteacher and other staff on request.
- Recording/filing any verbal or written reason for absence, given by an adult.
- sending daily emails to SLT Attendance Lead regarding attendance about children who are absent and late, daily.
- providing the registers for each class to the relevant class teacher during a fire drill/fire, together with any information regarding latecomers/children having left the building from the late book in order to provide the class total.
- Using the staff and visitor register, account for all staff and visitors recorded on site.
- recording any child arriving after 9.20 with a “U” code on the register, which will mean that they will be shown as absent on the register for the morning session of that day (but present in the building in case of evacuation).

The SLT Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring first day phone calls are made and reasons for absence are received and that school is satisfied that there no safeguarding concerns
- Where any concerns arise, SLT Lead must follow up and investigate thoroughly where and why a child is absent
- To report all concerns to the Safeguarding lead

- To send letters and information to parents regarding persistent absence
- To hold meetings with parents and when necessary, the AWO
- To ensure all procedures for CME (Children Missing Education) are adhered to and followed accurately (see CME policy)
- To report any concerns regarding CME to Lewisham immediately
- To report requests for absence to the Headteacher and hold meetings to find out further information
- To analyse and inspect registers, to identify patterns and concerns

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- making decisions regarding any leave of absence.
- ensuring that the recording of the annual return to the Department for Education – delegated to the attendance officer in the admin team.
- ensuring that daily monitoring of all children’s attendance is taking place, including those pupils who are being specifically monitored pre referral or on referral to the Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO)

3. Definitions

3.1 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 or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers 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

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

3.3 School sessions

- A school day is made up of two sessions; an am session (8:45am – 1:30pm) and a pm session (1:30pm – 3:30pm).
- Therefore, attendance figures display two register marks for one school day, e.g. 10 school days equals 20 register marks and one day of absence would be two absent marks.
- If a child arrives after register closes (after 9:20am) then they will be marked absent for the morning session. Again depending on whether the school accepts the reasoning for this lateness, this will affect whether this is an authorised or unauthorised absence.

3.4 Persistent absence

- The Local Authority currently classes Persistent Absences (PA) as children who have an attendance of below 90%. Any children who fall into the PA category will be monitored closely by the SLT Attendance Lead and referrals may be made to Lewisham AWO

4 If a child is absent

- 4.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office.
- 4.2 Admin assistant will report all absences to Admin Attendance Lead who will make first day phone calls to find out reason of absence.
- 4.3 Admin Attendance Lead will report all absences, reasons and any concerns to SLT Attendance Lead.
- 4.4 SLT Attendance Lead will ensure all concerns and reasons are investigated thoroughly and is satisfied that all absentees are safe and a valid reason has been provided
- 4.5 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 4.6 A note must be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 4.7 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, Admin Attendance Lead and SLT Attendance Lead will follow all procedures for CME (Child Missing Education) and any Safeguarding issues will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 4.8 If a child is in school and they leave school for any reason, their absence must be recorded in the 'children leaving early' folder located in the school office. This will record the child's name, when they left, why left and who they left with.
- 4.9 If a child is due to leave early at the request of a parent, they school must receive written evidence of an appointment, etc. Otherwise, it will be down to the discretion of SLT whether the child will be allowed to leave before the end of the school day.
- 4.10 If a child is ill, a member of SLT is the only one that can approve the child being sent home before the end of the school day.

5. Absence through illness

While attendance at school is important, children who are unwell should not attend. If they are unwell or injured such that they are unable to concentrate /participate in class activities, they should be kept at home until they feel better. If they may be infectious, they should be kept at home to avoid infecting other children and staff.

We monitor pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and maintain close links with parents / carers to ensure that the amount of missed school is limited. We continue to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

In some cases medical evidence may be requested to explain poor attendance i.e. letter from GP, copies of prescriptions, medical appointments.

6 Requests for leave of absence

6.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Only in exceptional circumstances may a parent legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. bereavement or a funeral. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance to request permission for authorised leave. Parents/ carers must complete the Request for Absence form that is available in the school

office and will be expected to have a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher to discuss this leave request.

6.2 We expect parents and carers to take their family holiday during the normal school holiday periods and holidays outside this time will not be granted .

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, 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 Repeated unauthorised absences

8.1 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 LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

8.2 The Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends the school at which they are on roll. A failure to do this could result in legal action being taken by the Local Authority and Penalty Notices. This applies to both continued absence (e.g. holiday in term time) and irregular attendance (e.g. Below Persistent Absence threshold) .

8.3 If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days, and the school has received no contact from the parent/carer and the school is also unable to contact the parent/carer, the school may begin to register the child as a Child Missing in Education and the LA will be involved.

9 Safeguarding and Home visits

9.1 If a child is absent the school will continue to call until a response is received and the school is satisfied the child is safe.

9.2 The school requires at least three contacts for a child, this can be each parent and an emergency contact (who will be contacted if the parents/carers are unavailable).

9.3 If the school do not hear from parents/carers regarding the reasons for a child's absence, the school will do a Home Visit within three days. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may decide a Home Visit is necessary before three days (e.g. on the day of the first absence).

9.4 If the school conduct a Home Visit and the school still have concerns: the school will ring the Police and let them know that the school have been trying and being unsuccessful at contacting a parent/carer, the school had conducted a home visit, and the school are still concerned and the school require the police to do a Welfare Check.

9.5 The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be made aware of all home visits and referrals to the police. As well as, being the one to decide whether or not a home visit is conducted on the day of an absence.

9.10. All Attendance is collected via an online Attendance Register. If in the event of ICT failure, paper registers will be used that will be printed the night before (fire evacuation folder).

In the unfortunate event that a fire does break out before, Class Teachers will be expected to complete a head count every morning when their children arrive (editing as children arrive) and complete a Head Count chart (attached to whiteboard). If registers have not been complete before a Fire should break out, all children must be accounted for via a Head Count – to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

10 Rewards for good attendance

10.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

11 Attendance targets

11.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. 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.

11.2 The school will take action regarding any children classed as being Persistent Absent regardless of whether absences have been authorised, as directed by Lewisham Council guidelines.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. 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.

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

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

12.4 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 headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

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

13.1 For any further information or up-to-date guidance from Lewisham (our Local Authority) please visit:

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/education/schools/attendance/Pages/default.aspx>

13.2 Education Act 1996: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

13.3 Department of Education guidance on attendance 2016:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Below are templates of the letters you may receive regarding your child's attendance:

<Date >

<Address>
<Address>
<Address>
<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first Letter to register our concern with parents. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current level of attendance:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Authorised Absence	<current AA> %
Unauthorised Absence	<current UA> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.
95%: 10 days absence a year These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.
90%: 19 days absence a year The Government classes Young People in this group as "Persistent Absentees", young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%: 29 days absence a year The Government classes Young People in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact <named school person> on <telephone number>

Yours sincerely

<School contact>

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <name of parent / carer>

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. If you would like to discuss <name of pupil>'s attendance please contact <school contact> on <school contact number> and I will be happy to talk with you and if required arrange a meeting.

We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and may refer your child's absence to the Education Welfare Service for consideration of a fixed penalty notice fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours sincerely

<School Contact>

<Date >

<Address>
<Address>
<Address>
<Address>

Dear **<name of parent / carer>**

As you will be aware from our previous two letters, we have concerns with regard to **<name of pupil>**'s attendance of **<attendance percentage>**%. Unfortunately we have not received a satisfactory reason for **<name of pupil>**'s absence and their attendance has failed to improve significantly.

I enclose your child's most recent registration certificate for your information.

On-going low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with **<name of pupil>**. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

In order to help you ensure that **<name of pupil>** improves their attendance, I would like to meet with you to discuss the situation further. The meeting has been arranged for:

<Date and Time of Meeting>

If you have any difficulties in attending this meeting please contact me to arrange another time and date to meet.

Yours sincerely,

<School Contact>

**REQUEST TO TAKE YOUR CHILD/REN
OUT OF SCHOOL IN TERM TIME**

PARENT/CARER TO FILL OUT PLEASE

NAME OF CHILD/REN _____ CLASS/ES _____

REASON FOR REQUEST _____

DATE OF PROPOSED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL: FROM: _____ TO _____

SIGNED PARENT/CARER: _____ DATE: _____

Parent/Carer PRINT NAME: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO SCHOOL OFFICE

We must draw your attention to the fact that the school does not support children being taken out of school for holidays outside the normal school holidays. The maximum authorised absence a child is allowed in a school year is 10 days. Please note the school does not provide any work for the children who are taken on holiday during school time.

For school use only:

Dear: _____ ,

Your request of absence during term time for your child/ren: _____, has been

- Granted as **authorised absence** because:

- Will be classed as **unauthorised absence** because:

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.
Yours sincerely,

Miss Doherty
Assistant Head teacher