

UPDATED	JUNE 2018
TO BE REVIEWED	JUNE 2021



ST. JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ST. JOSEPH'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. Statement of Intent
2. School Attendance - The Statutory Framework
3. Registration
4. Absence
5. Reporting of Absence - Procedure
6. Categorising Absence
7. Lateness
8. Role of the Inclusion & Family Support Officer
9. Attendance and Special Needs
10. Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality
- Appendix 1 Traffic Light System - attendance letter to parents/carers

1. Statement of Intent

St. Joseph's Primary School believes that regular attendance is important for pupils to take full advantage of the educational provision made available to them. Irregular attendance is likely to place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a school, therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of regular pupil attendance. In this matter the partnership between school and home is important. School aims to help children develop their full potential, and parents have a responsibility to aid the education process by ensuring that children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a suitable condition to learn. We expect our parents to value school and their children's education and to support our school's rules.

St. Joseph's Primary School aims to achieve a target of at least 96% for each pupil.

2. School Attendance - The Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 - Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Education Act 1996 - Establishes the duty of LA's to enforce school attendance (Section 444).

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 - Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991.

Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OfSTED) - August 1993.

3. Registration

- 3.1 There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.
- 3.3 Class registers are recorded electronically using Sims. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely.
- 3.4 Hartlepool Local Authority requires all teachers to use the symbols shown in table below for the marking of registers.

Attendance Codes

- B Educated off site
- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- G Family Holiday (Not agreed or days in excess of agreement)

H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical or dental etc appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absences (not covered by any other code/description)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registration closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
-	All should attend/no mark recorded

- 3.5 In accordance with current legislation, each class in school will complete the attendance register by 9.00 a.m. and 1.20 p.m.
- 3.6 It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place. Parents/carers must fill in the late signing in book when bringing their child into the school office and give a reason for being late. This is recorded as L on the Sims register.
- 3.7 We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupts their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated

for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

- 3.8 After 9.30 a.m. a "U" for unauthorised absence is recorded. Children arriving after this time, without good reason are recorded as an unauthorised absence. If punctuality becomes a concern then the Inclusion & Family Support Officer will invite parents/carers into school to discuss the impact it is having upon their child's education.

4. Absence

- 4.1 It is the parent's responsibility to inform school on the first day of absence. We need to receive information when the child returns to school.
- 4.2 It is a fact that parentally-condoned unjustified absence is a serious problem in some schools. This can be every bit as damaging as the more traditional forms of truancy.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt, remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the Local Authority Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

- 4.3 An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

4.4 Unauthorised absence will be treated seriously in line with our fast track policy as follows:

- Pupils to be targeted who have attendance between 65% - 90%
- Targeted pupils will be sent a letter home advising their child's progress will be monitored for a four week period and if their attendance fails to improve they will be invited to attend an Attendance Case Conference. These will be pupils who have between 65% and 90% for the previous half term.
- A six week plan will be put in place and a Warning Letter issued. A minimum of 90% attendance is expected for the duration of the plan. If attendance is below 90%, consideration will be given forwarding the case to court.
- Those parents who do not attend the meeting without contacting the School Inclusion & Family Support Officer or the Local Authority Attendance Officer, consideration will be given to issuing a Penalty Notice Warning Letter immediately.
- No absence (of targeted pupils) is to be authorised unless agreed between school and the Local Authority School Attendance Officer, for example a medical note is received.
- Home visits to be carried out by the Local Authority School Attendance Officer during this period and all records kept as appropriate.
- Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within 28 days will result in Court Action being taken under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- If attendance has improved school will monitor attendance for the next half term.

4.5 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 provides that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.

4.6 Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the teacher from the child's parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised

4.7 Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, school or our Inclusion & Family Support Officer can refer the matter to a doctor working in the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make contact with the pupil's GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and/or the School Health Service.

4.8 Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent and production of an appointment card, phone confirmation seen by the Teacher/Admin in the school office.

Can we ask that where possible medical/dental appointments are made outside of school hours.

5. Reporting of Absence Procedure

5.1 Parents/carers are expected to telephone school as soon as they can if their child is absent for any reason. If they do not get in touch with the school, 'first response' telephone calls are made to parents/carers to establish the reason for absence.

5.2 A record will be kept on the electronic register of any conversations and reasons for absence. A copy of medical/dental appointments will be kept on pupil files.

5.3 If an explanation for a child's absence has not been received after three school days a letter will be sent to the parents/carers asking for a written explanation.

5.4 Reported absences can be referred to the School Inclusion & Family Support Officer if:

- a) The absence is regular/repeated and, therefore, affecting the child's education.
- b) There is cause for concern that the child is at risk.

- c) If the School Inclusion & Family Support Officer personally identifies an attendance problem through a register check.

5.5 Holidays in term time - What the Law says:

The regulations make it clear that parents **do not** have any automatic right or entitlement to take a child out of school. Indeed, it is likely that in most cases Headteachers will refuse to authorise the absence.

The regulations state that Headteachers cannot grant a leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

- 5.6 Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the child's parents/carers must sign the child out of school and when the child returns from an appointment the parents must sign them in again. This is so staff are aware of the whereabouts of the child in the event of an emergency evacuation. Provide the office with a copy of any letters/appointment cards for appointments such as doctor, dental, speech and language.

6. Categorising Absence

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences. The Local Authority states the following key points which we must always bear in mind:-

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school;
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular

attendance;

- Lateness should be actively discouraged;
- When a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly;
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes when there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered;
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not be acceptable reasons for absence;
- Holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Even when absence is authorised, schools should be alerted to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.
- In promoting regular attendance, schools should work closely with the appropriate education department staff.

7. Lateness

- 7.1 It is St. Joseph's School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.
- 7.2 For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.
- 7.3 Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the School office and parents/carers must enter the child's name, class and time of arrival in the late book with an explanation.
- 7.4 If the child has been late more than three times during a half-term, a letter will be sent home to draw the parent's attention to the fact, underlining the need for punctuality.
- 7.5 In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness the School Inclusion & Family Support Officer will consult with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to address the situation.

8. Role of Inclusion & Family Support Officer

- 8.1 The role of our designated Inclusion & Family Support Officer is to:
- Work with children who are experiencing problems with attendance and/or punctuality
 - Liaise, where appropriate, between home and school;
 - Investigate irregular attendance or lateness which may give rise to concerns that a child may be at risk;
- 8.2 Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer

Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer will be made in the following circumstances:

- A child's absence is regular and/or repeated and therefore affecting the child's education;
- A pupil has been absent for two consecutive weeks and the absence is unauthorised;
- Intervention by the school has failed to secure a pupil's regular attendance.
- Action taken to date by the school;
- Parents/pupils attitudes towards school and the school's intervention;
- Parental reasons for non-attendance;
- Action taken by school to resolve any identified problems;
- Information regarding any special educational needs the pupil may have, academic attainments and support being provided by the school;
- Information regarding potential aggression from the parents.

Progress reports on children with low attendance records will be given to the school at regular intervals by the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

9. Attendance and Special Needs

A child cannot be placed on the SEN register simply because of poor attendance. However if a child does have SEN and also has a poor attendance record, this contributing factor will be strongly communicated to parents. Similarly where a child is falling behind in his/her work due to poor attendance, this will be cited when making a referral to the Attendance Officer.

10 Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

10.1 As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at St. Joseph's School.

10.2 The school will hold regular assemblies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and to reward those children who have a good attendance record. The Class with the highest attendance for the week will receive the attendance cup and a class certificate in the assembly.

Children with 100% attendance for every half term will attend reward sessions such as craft, cake making, sport and ICT.

10.3

Children with 100% for the whole school year will receive a reward out of school such as a trip to the park.

10.4

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance - Traffic Light System

Please find below your child's attendance category from 22 October 2018 to 13 December. There are 3 categories;

GREEN - attendance that is 96% and above

AMBER - attendance that is between 90% - 95.99%

RED - attendance that is below 90%

_____ attendance is _____% and

therefore in the _____ category.

Your child's overall attendance from 4 September 2018 is _____%

If your child is in Green we would have no reason to be concerned, Amber we would urge you to be aware of any further absences from school and Red would be a concern to the school and could result in a referral to the School Attendance Officer.

We hope you will find this information useful, if you need help to improve attendance or should you wish to discuss this further please don't hesitate to contact me or Mrs Willis.