

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Worcester

'Following Jesus in all we do'



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

Date Policy Ratified: 21st September 2021

COVID 19 AMENDMENTS FOR MARCH 2021 ONWARDS ARE INDICATED IN RED AND ARE IN PLACE FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION

School adheres to the guidelines stated in the link below for the academic year 2021-2022

[Recording Attendance in relation to COVID 19 during the academic year 2021-2022](#)

Date for Review: May 2023

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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.

LEGISLATION

Due to the

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.

Staggered starts remain in place for the Autumn term 2021. This is in line with the school risk assessment.

Morning and afternoon registration closure times are as follows:

Year Group(s)	Morning Registration closes at:	Afternoon registration closes at:
Years 5 and 6	8.45am	1.25pm
Years 3 & 4	8.50am	1.35pm
Year 2	8.55am	1.35pm
Year 1	9.00am	1.55pm
Reception	9.05am	1.45pm

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.

Self-isolation is reported to the school as an absence but is recorded as an X – this is for all pupils who are awaiting a PCR result. If the test result is positive with a PCR, they are marked as ill so an I. result.

See updated guidance: [Recording non-attendance relating to Coronavirus Covid 19](#)

Children who are off due to Covid 19 symptoms must take a PCR test and if negative can return to school. If positive they remain off for 10 days. This is in line with Government guidelines. Remote learning is available for those children as long as they are well enough to access. This is monitored by the class teacher.

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.

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.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

It may be necessary in some situations for children to be put onto a part time timetable due to behavioural issues or specific concerns (see Behaviour policy, SEND policy and Medical Conditions policy). We have a duty of care to ensure that our children are given the best opportunity to thrive. Reducing children’s time in school is a decision that is only taken following assessments from external agencies and agreed procedures on all sides including parents. These decisions are reviewed regularly in school. We aim to get these children back into Full Time Education as soon as possible. Our procedure is as follows:

1. Complete the part time timetable log; if prolonged complete the irregular attendance log through WCF
2. Ensure all assessments and records are uploaded onto My Concern and sent to the LA / EWO as requested.
3. Keep a log of all review meetings and discussions with parents on My Concern
4. In serious cases complete an IHCP and pass to the EWO for section 19* panel

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

(See detail in Safeguarding Policy)

Close monitoring of attendance ensures that every child’s attendance matters at St Joseph’s.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff follow the correct procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All of our staff have been trained to be alert to the signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

School will report any child ‘missing in Education’ through discussion with EWO

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 and safeguard all children. 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: 21st September 2021

Review date: September 2023