

# **Saint Joseph's Primary a Catholic Voluntary Academy**



## **Attendance Policy**

**January 2023**



## **Introduction**

St. Joseph's School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. We expect every student to aim for 100% attendance during the academic year and to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to the broader school community. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school. The Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation: it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement. We work with families and refer to relevant services to give support where possible, identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve difficulties.

St. Joseph's School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility between parents, carers, students, staff, the Governing Board and the wider school community. As such, all stakeholders have a responsibility to support and promote outstanding attendance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Head Teacher/Legalities

Government guidelines state that no leave of absence can be authorised by School for holidays during term time. School expects all holidays to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are exceptional circumstances, school may authorise leave but will consider each request on its own merit.

Requests for leave during term time should be made in writing, by the parent/carer, providing the reason for making the request and stating specific start and end dates. The request should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the intended leave date. Exceptional circumstances may be considered. Failure to return to school on the expected day after leave may result in a student being taken off roll at St. Joseph's School and they will then need to reapply for a place. Parents should be aware that this process may not be successful. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. St. Joseph's will always refer to the Local

Authority when any leave of absence is taken without permission and this may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice or court hearing. St. Joseph's School acknowledges and rejoices in the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance, in line with the external guidance. A maximum of three days in any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

#### Parents/Carers

At St. Joseph's School we give the achievement of good attendance and punctuality high priority. Students who do not attend school cannot take advantage of educational opportunities and may not achieve their potential. The target for each student is 97% attendance or above. If a students' attendance drops below 97%, parents will be contacted by school as part of the school's staged intervention plan. Parents and all school staff share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

It is the parents and carers legal responsibility to ensure their child attends School. St. Joseph's School realises that there may be occasional barriers to attendance and offer supportive strategies to overcome these barriers. It is therefore essential that parents and carers engage with school and services in a positive way. Parents/carers must contact school at the start of the first day of absence. It is vital that all non-essential appointments are taken outside of school hours, because appointments in school hours will not automatically be authorised.

#### **Absence**

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness – In the first instance, parents and carers need to contact school, informing them of the illness. If an absence for illness exceeds 2 days, parents must contact school. In order for absence of longer than 2 days to be authorised, evidence needs to be provided to the school. Examples of relevant evidence needed could be an appointment card, prescription etc. If unsure, please contact the school office.

Medical or Dental Appointments - Parents must, where possible, organise medical and dental appointments outside of the school day, because these appointments may not be authorised. Where this is not possible, students should always attend before or after the

designated appointment in order to reduce further impact on their education. Parents and carers should show the appointment card to school.

Exceptional Authorised Circumstances - Relates to occasions where there is reason for absence due to exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement.

### **Legal Responsibilities**

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Staff in school will support parents, carers and students to ensure this occurs and refer to external agencies for their support should it be necessary. St. Joseph's School will not accept poor attendance. A parent and carer must ensure regular school attendance of their child if they are a registered student at a school and of compulsory school age in the United Kingdom.

### **Punctuality**

Students are expected to be on time for school and present for registration. Lateness to school is not tolerated and contact will be made by school to parents and carers regarding poor punctuality. Persistent poor punctuality may be escalated to the Local Authority.

## **St. Joseph's**

### **Attendance: Staged Intervention Plan**

#### **Stage 1**

Less than 97% attendance in a period of 4 weeks

ACTION: Supportive text or letter to parents highlighting poor attendance.

**If attendance improves to above 97%**, acknowledge the improvement and monitor.

#### **Stage 2**

No improvement in attendance during the following 4 week period.

ACTION: Letter to parents inviting them to an attendance meeting with member of SLT.

Absences remain unauthorised unless evidence is provided.

LA notified of concerns

**If attendance improves to above 97%**, acknowledge the improvement and monitor.

#### **Stage 3**

No improvement in attendance during the following 4 week period.

ACTION: Letter to parents inviting to attendance meeting with member of SLT.

Absences remain unauthorised unless evidence is provided.

LA notified of ongoing concerns

Legal proceedings where attendance falls below 90%