

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

Attendance Policy



Policy Completed By: SLT

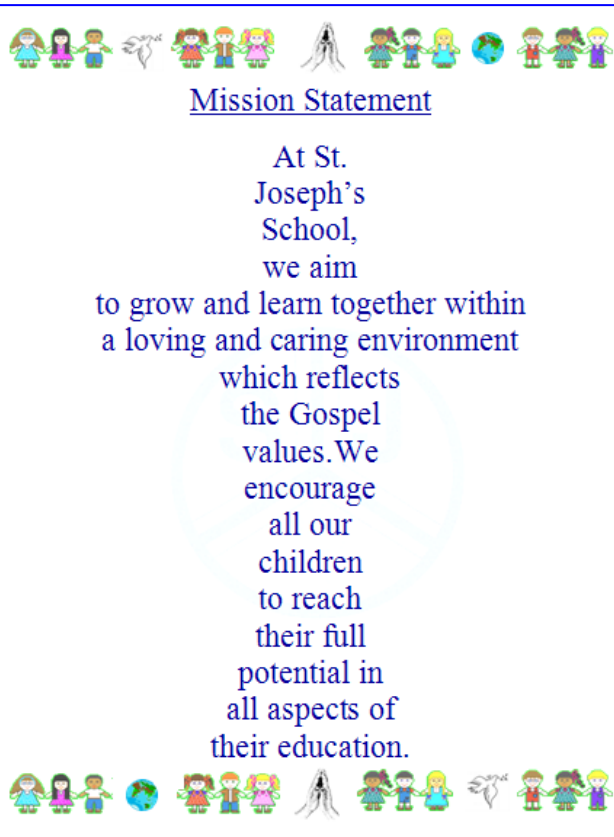
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Mission Statement

At St.
Joseph's
School,
we aim
to grow and learn together within
a loving and caring environment
which reflects
the Gospel
values. We
encourage
all our
children
to reach
their full
potential in
all aspects of
their education.

1) Aims

At St Joseph's we recognise that high levels of attendance are fundamental to enabling all of our children to achieve their full potential. We aim to ensure that pupils and their families value their education; few pupils are absent or persistently absent; pupils are punctual and rarely late; no individuals or groups of pupils are disadvantaged because of poor attendance and that high rates of attendance are consistently maintained.

2) Rationale

High attendance of pupils correlates closely with raising standards of pupil attainment, progress and fulfilling potential. If children are to derive maximum benefit from their education, they must attend school regularly and on time.

3) Legislation

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](#)

[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 \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

4) Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The school

It is the responsibility of the school to:

- Efficiently and accurately register pupils.
- Contact parents if a child fails to attend without satisfactory explanation. First day contact will be made in all cases by a member of the admin team. If the school is unable to contact the parent(s)/primary carer, efforts will then be made to contact other listed contacts to ascertain the reason for the absence. (*Also see Safeguarding policy*).
- To prioritise first day contact for pupils in year 5 and 6 who have permission to travel to school alone.
- To promote positive attitudes to attendance by taking account of pupils individual needs
- To have in place clear communication routes to discuss any difficulties which may prevent a pupil from attending school; first through the contact with the school office and / or class teacher and then the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

3.2 The parents

It is the responsibility of the parents to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly
- Ensure their child arrives on time for school
- Contact the school on the first day of absence if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason and provide a note on the child's return to school. *(If for any reason the parent is unable to contact the school directly, they should make every effort to ask another adult to contact the school on their behalf).*
- Ensure that their child is prepared with necessary equipment to attend school
- Support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full attendance at school.

5) Registration Procedures

Registers are marked in line with the guidance in the front of each register and that provided by the Educational Welfare Service.

- Every entry in the register will be in red and black ink; any corrections will be made in such a manner that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable. Tippex is **not** to be used
- Children will be registered before 9.00am each morning and at 12.25pm (KS1) and 1.20pm (KS2) each afternoon.
- Children arriving late will have their time of arrival and reason for being late recorded. Children arriving after 8.55am are marked as late. Children arriving after 9.25am will be marked as 'unauthorised late'. (For the afternoon sessions, 'unauthorised late' would apply from 12.55pm and 1.50pm respectively).
- Reasons for absences will be recorded in the register authorising the absence or not.
- The registers are stored securely and managed by the admin team.
- The registers will be regularly checked by an administration officer, who will complete totals and ensure they are properly recorded
- Registers are available to the FEH for register inspection, feedback will be given to the staff
- Whole school attendance policy is available from the school office.

6) Absence

It is a statutory requirement for the Headteacher to decide whether every absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence, before 8:30am by calling the school office.

On receipt of this phone call you will be asked for the following information:

- Name of your child (please spell if necessary)
- Name of class
- The relationship to the child of the person who is reporting the absence
- Callers must provide the reason for absence or exact nature of their child's illness.

Reasons for absence must be recorded in the register and notes filed in the child's pupil file.

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If a child is prevented from attending school by reasons of illness, this absence will be treated as authorised. School must be informed as outlined above.

Authorisation in any other exceptional circumstance can only be granted following discussion with the Head, Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.

The Headteacher reserves the right to declare any absence unauthorised if:

- there is no explanation given
- the explanation is not reasonable for the absence
- the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

School procedures to follow up absences

All absences that are not accounted for will be actioned immediately. The school has a comprehensive system for following up unexplained absences. The Admin Team have initial responsibility for following up unexplained absences. Persistent absences/lateness are managed by the Headteacher who conducts interviews with parents to discuss concerns.

Local Educational Authorities are responsible with enforcing school attendance. Where the irregular attendance of a pupil causes concern the LA can prosecute parents. St. Joseph's School works closely with the Family Early Help (FEH) Service in order to raise attendance and punctuality and to support families in need of support and advice.

Decisions to refer families to the FEH are made by the Headteacher. The Headteacher reports regularly to the governing body on attendance patterns.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Head Teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted. Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised. The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

Parent/carers must follow school procedures when requesting leave of absence for their child: Requests should be made at least 4 school weeks in advance through a letter addressed to the Headteacher which will be followed up by a face to face meeting.

Family Holidays

- It is not acceptable for children to be absent for annual holidays or trips during term time
- In exceptional circumstances authorisation can be legally granted to a maximum of ten school days, following interview with the Head, Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.
- Where parents fail to seek authorisation, the absence will be deemed as unauthorised and will be referred to Early Help Service through referral form CAF.

Parental Notes

Parentally condoned unjustified absence is equally as damaging as truancy. Only school staff can authorise absence, not parents. The fact that a parent may offer a note or other notification in relation to a particular absence does not oblige the school to accept it as a valid reason for absence. If in the opinion of the school the explanation offered is unacceptable (or where no explanation is given) the absence must be treated as **UNAUTHORISED**. Absence of pupils without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided must be treated as unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are frequently absent as a result of illness may be referred to the school nurse and/or the FEH.

7) Lateness & Punctuality

It is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure pupils are on time for school. The beginning of the day is an important part of the school day – it is the time when teachers discuss the day's work and often introduce new ideas to the class. It is therefore crucial that all pupils are present and ready to work. Being late seriously affects pupil progress. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but also that of others. When pupils arrive after 8.55am the register will be marked as late and the time noted.

Children's attendance is closely monitored by the Admin. Team and the SLT. Persistent lateness will result in attendance meetings with the SLT to discuss the reasons for persistent absences and could result in referral to Family Early Help services if the problem persists.

Promoting Attendance & Punctuality

The school will give high profile to awards for attendance and punctuality each academic year. The school will value good punctuality and attendance by an award to the class with the lowest number of late marks and highest attendance each week, across the whole school. The school

will give annual certificates to all children achieving 100% attendance with no late arrivals recorded.

8) Monitoring Attendance

Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed to ensure that high standards of attendance are sustained consistently. Whole school attendance data is included within school newsletters. The Headteacher reviews attendance across the school weekly and disseminates this information to staff as appropriate. The Headteacher will present figures on attendance to the Governing Body every term in the Headteacher's report. Attendance figures, expressed as a percentage, will be included on the annual report of every child and, where there has been an attendance problem, the Headteacher and class teacher will draw attention to it in his/her comments.

9) Educational Welfare Officer

Families and members of staff who have concerns relating to attendance may contact the FEH through the duty service – Telephone No: 020 7525 1922.

Our Schools Point of Contact (SPOC) is: Michelle Polack T: 020 752 55099

10) COVID-19

Local and National Restrictions

To be read in conjunction with the school's safeguarding policy and 'School Opening Guidelines'.

Attendance expectations

Circumstances around COVID-19 have changed attendance expectations. Once the government restrictions permit, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development. School attendance will therefore be mandatory and in line with the government's measures. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply and the existing school attendance policy will be enforced, including:

- All pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.)
- The parent/legal guardian has a duty to ensure their child attends regularly at school (where a child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age);
- The school's responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- The local authorities' availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Pupils who are self-isolating

A very small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating, have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves or because they are in close contact with someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). If a child is unable to attend school, parents should follow the normal arrangements for reporting their absence. In this case, the school will talk parents through the support that is in place for remote education, if the child is well enough.

See the guidance on test and trace and how it works <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-developsymptoms-of-coronavirus> and stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Local rises

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, may be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent. In this case, the local authority may also advise the school to close temporarily to help control transmission. Be reassured that the school has a contingency plan already in place if this was to happen. This may involve a return to remaining open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, and providing remote education for all other pupils.

For further information on the measure we shall implement as a school to prevent the potential spread of the Coronavirus please see ‘School Opening Guidelines Spring 2021’.

School Attendance Policy

Appendix 1

Guidance for good practice in children's travel to and from school.

Children at St. Joseph's School in Years Five and Six may travel to school and leave school unaccompanied if they have their parents or carers permission.

The Headteacher/Deputy Head must be informed before children may travel unaccompanied, through filling in the appropriate permission slip (see below)

Where possible Year Five/Six children will be encouraged to travel in pairs when crossing roads and travelling on buses.

In line with appropriate health and safety guidance, it is not considered acceptable for children in years three and four to travel to school/home unaccompanied.

Year Six pupils may collect and accompany other pupils home from Year 4 only with their parents/carers permission. Parents must provide permission and notify this using the appropriate form.

Although Year Five children with permission may travel to and from school unaccompanied, they should not take responsibility for other children.

Pupils in Key Stage One should be collected by parents, or carers. Brothers or sisters of secondary school age may collect siblings in KS1 after notifying the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

Nursery children must be brought to school and collected by a parent, or carer.

Children are not permitted to arrive in school until 8.40.am when the playground is supervised, unless attending the school's breakfast club.

Children must be collected at 3.15.pm. unless attending After School Club, or an extra curricular club.

Children in Year Five/Six who are sent home due to illness must be accompanied by a responsible adult. (please see attached permission slip).

Travelling to school by bicycle

The pupils attending St. Joseph's School are not permitted to travel to school using a bicycle. This decision has been taken in light of the number of major roads in the immediate area surrounding the school and to ensure the safety of all our pupils.

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School

George Row, London SE16 4UP



Telephone: 0207 237 4267
www.stjosephsgeorgerow.org

Headteacher: Mrs Byrne

Dear Parents / Carers,

This is a letter for parents of children currently in year groups 4 and 5. Your child will be in year groups 5 or 6 next academic year and, in accordance with our school policy, has the option to travel to and from school alone with your consent.

It is your decision, as a parent, whether you allow your child to travel home alone and you will need to consider the following:

- transport (walking, use of public transport...oyster cards)
- departure times, journey duration times, journey routes
- return times/home access
- contacts (mobile phones are discouraged. However, if you wish your child to use this, as necessary, during lone travel periods, please indicate this on the slip below. Mobile phones will be kept by the school office for the duration of the school day)
- maturity of your child regarding personal safety

The school runs a breakfast club from 8:00am each school morning and this will be open on the first day of school, (Wed. 5th Sep. 2018).

As a school we offer this opportunity because we recognise the children are on a learning journey and are nearing their transition to secondary school. Travelling home alone, whether in Year 5 or 6, allows the children to develop independence and responsibility. However, it is your decision as to whether you think it is the right time for your child to be given this option or not.

Please could you complete the permission slip below indicating whether or not your child will be allowed to travel to or from school alone or both.

This slip should be returned by Thursday 19th July 2018. This will allow us to update our records and send out confirmation letters. If you need more time to think about the matter, then simply keep the same collection arrangements that you have in place now for September and you can contact the school office in the new school year if you wish to change your decision at any time.

✂-----

My child _____ **currently in** _____ **Class will:**

(Please tick as appropriate)

- Travel to school alone
- Travel home from school alone
- Use a mobile phone for necessary contact *only* during lone travel periods
Mobile Number
- Be brought to school by an adult
- Be collected from school by an adult

I have given my consent to the statements with a checked box. I understand it is my responsibility to ensure my child arrives in school and is collected from school on time. I understand that I must contact the school if my child is unable to attend school or if another adult is collecting my child.

NB: Children in Years 5 and 6 will be dismissed from the West Gate in the corner of the main playground (opposite the Wade Hall)

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____ Date: _____