

# Attendance Policy

September 2022

## **School Mission Statement**

*In following the Gospel values of Jesus, we are called to love, to learn and to respect one another.*

### **School Attendance Aims**

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of its curriculum provision and wider strategies. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

At St Joseph's we recognise that high standards in attendance is the key to achievement at school. The school's current attendance target for 2022-23 is **97%**.

Each and every day that the school is open for registration children are expected to attend school, unless any absence is authorised by the school.

### **Partnership between parents and the school**

At St Joseph's we recognise that attendance is the responsibility of pupils, parents and all school staff, who will work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance so that pupils reach their potential.

Matters pertaining to attendance will be mentioned and/or agreed upon;

- within the home-school-parish agreement;
- at induction meetings;
- in school newsletters.

The whole school approach to attendance recognises the important roles of all members of the school community, including support staff and governors.

### **School responsibilities to improve attendance**

In order to achieve excellent attendance, we will adhere to our role as directed in the home school agreement. This includes:

- a high-quality creative curriculum so that pupils enjoy learning and want to come to school;
- providing for the needs of all pupils, offering an inclusive environment where all can achieve success;
- following up all unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents;

The school has a duty by law to refer any absence of 2 days or more where it has been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the LA's Education Investigation Service (EIS).

### **Procedures - Parents' responsibilities**

In order to achieve excellent attendance at St Joseph's we ask the parents to try to adhere to their role as directed in the home-school-parish agreement.

Parents and carers should let the school know by 9.15am daily if a child is going to be absent that day.

Parents should notify the school as soon as possible of when a pupil will return to school. This will allow for any necessary preparations on the part of the school and will help to monitor the return of pupils who may truant.

Only the Principal can authorise absence at St Joseph's, and parents should apply in advance for permission for any exceptional absence.

Absence from school affects the child's educational/social and personal attainment. The school therefore expects family holidays to be taken during school holiday periods. All holidays are classed as unauthorised.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EIS will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 Section 444.

If a child is going to be absent from school, if possible, parents are requested to give notice of this in advance.

Examples of this would include:-

- Medical/Dental appointments
- Pre-arranged visits or other appointments

We would hope that where possible parents arrange dental/medical appointments during holidays or before or after school.

### **Leave of absence in term time**

Leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Principal (not the local authority) or his designate may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing/on a form provided by the school. Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the local authority may be requested. When requesting a penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12-month period.

### **Pupil's responsibilities**

Pupils should:

- attend school regularly;
- arrive at school on time. Persistence lateness will result in action, such as a letter to parents and/or a referral to the EIS;

- take part in lessons as required by teaching staff;
- take full advantage of all opportunities offered;
- bring any difficulties such as bullying to the attention of the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff.

### **Registration**

Registers must be completed twice a day, in the morning and afternoon sessions. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session every day, and return their registers to the school office.

School gates open at 8.45am registration opens at 8.55am. If pupils are not in class by 9.05am they will be marked as a late "L". Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as 'U' which stands for 'late after register closes' and is classed as an unauthorised absence. Continual lateness will be investigated by the school.

School registers are checked daily by the school administrator/assistant and monitored regularly by the Principal. Where a pupil has not returned to school after two days absence, the administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone. If unsuccessful the EIS may be contacted.

The school has adopted a computerised attendance procedure which will enable the school to scrutinise attendance trends.

All letters and messages received from parents relating to attendance will be held on file.

### **Incentives and rewards**

The school recognises good and improved attendance, for example through:

- School newsletters
- Weekly attendance trophy
- Termly attendance certificates
- Yearly prize draw
- Walk once a Week programme (Active Travel)

### **Monitoring and support**

On a weekly basis, the Principal and school administrator/assistant monitor attendance for individual pupils, classes and year groups. The attendance rates will be communicated throughout the school community, including to governors and parents as appropriate.

A record of pupils leaving or returning to the school mid-session is maintained – parent/carer records the time of leaving and/or returning and the reason.

Absence *which causes concern*: this must be defined e.g.

- Regular lateness
- Regular absenteeism
- Any unexplained absence
- Truancy
- Attendance below 96%

The EIS requires schools to refer pupils whose attendance and punctuality falls beneath certain standards. The school will notify the EIS of these pupils and will discuss other pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and for whom in-school strategies have been unsuccessful.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the EIS.

### **Children Missing from Education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who 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 going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

For further information: Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities 2016

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children Missing Education - statutory guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

### **What the Law says about school attendance**

By law all children of compulsory school age (between age 5 and 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 requires children and young people of compulsory school age to regularly attend the school at which he/she is on roll. It states if 'the parent knows that his/her child is failing to attend regularly at school without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence'. Upon conviction you may be fined up to £2,500 per parent, per child and/or up to 3 months imprisonment. If you wish further information please see [DMBC Education Investigation Service](#).

### **Summary**

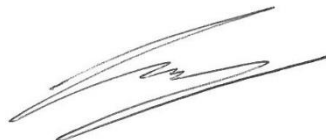
The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. Staff are committed to working with parents the best way possible to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible by all children.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

Date adopted by Local Governing Body: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Signed (Principal):



Signed (Chair of St. Joseph's Local Governing Body):



Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_

**Re: School Attendance Concern**

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is currently \_\_\_ which is below the national expectation of 96%. I understand that there may be reasons why your child has not attended school for a total of \_\_\_ sessions, however, all schools are required by each Local Authority to monitor the attendance of its pupils.

The Board of Directors of the Emmaus Multi Academy Company also requires each academy school to submit termly attendance rates for the children across the company.

When a child's attendance reaches 90% or lower this is classed by the government as 'persistent absence'. If a child's attendance falls to this level, external advice and a possible referral will be made to Dudley's Education Investigation Service (EIS). The EIS is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their legal obligations in respect of their child's education.

We ask that you work in collaboration with the school to ensure that your child continues to receive a suitable full-time education as outlined in Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

Further information and advice about the Education Investigation Service can be found at the following link: <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/learning-school/parental-support/dudley-education-investigation-service/>

Yours sincerely,

Mr. A. Carry

Principal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_

**Re: School Attendance Notice – Unauthorised Absence**

I am writing to inform you that your child has been marked on the school register for a total of \_\_\_ unauthorised sessions from \_\_\_ until \_\_\_.

The school's behaviour policy clearly reiterates the Department for Education's (DfE) advice with regard unauthorised absence. Leave of absence – Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that a Head teacher/Principal MAY NOT authorise a leave of absence in term time for a holiday. A Head teacher/Principal MAY (at his or her own discretion) authorise absence for exceptional circumstances.

If further periods of unauthorised absence occur, the school will make a referral to the Education Investigation Service (Dudley). The EIS is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their obligations under the law in respect of their child's education. This may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued by the EIS to each parent for each child.

We ask that you work in collaboration with the school to ensure that your child continues to receive a suitable full-time education as outlined in Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

Further information and advice about the Education Investigation Service can be found at the following link: <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/learning-school/parental-support/dudley-education-investigation-service/>

Yours sincerely,

Mr. A. Carry

Principal