

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY **'Live, love and learn in a caring Christian Community'**

St Joseph's is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure their child/children attend school every day.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they notify the school daily of absence or if known, in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Attendance Targets

Our school sets its own target of attendance. Our target for 2020/2021 is:

97% attendance during the academic year.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning and afternoon registration times are as follows:

The morning registration will be at	9.10 AM.
The registers will close at	9.15AM
The afternoon registration will be at	1.15 PM.
The registers will close at	1.30 PM.

Any pupil arriving after the registers have closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending a medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Pupils leaving school after the registers have closed in the afternoon will be treated for statistical purposes as present. However, parents/carers must sign their child out via the School Office.

Absence

On the child's first day of absence, parents/carers are expected to contact the school via phone, e-mail or fax by 10.00am.

A member of staff will contact the parent/carers by 11.00am if the school has not been notified of the child's absence.

Absence notes

An absence note will be requested by the school if the parent / carer has not contacted the school with a reason for their child's absence. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, will be requested.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer the case to the Attendance and Improvement Officer.

Persistent Absence

The DfE defines a persistent absentee as a pupil who misses more than 8% of sessions in an academic year. The school's Attendance and Improvement Officer will monitor the attendance of these pupils and may start legal proceedings if attendance does not improve.

Term Time Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In addition, the school should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The exceptional circumstances for St Joseph's School are:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time and evidence is provided to this effect.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis e.g. visiting a seriously / terminally ill relative and the holiday is likely to be the last such holiday
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Please note that any other request e.g. because of the overall cost of the extended leave in normal school holidays, cannot be counted as an exceptional circumstance.

Normally, a pupil shall not be granted more than 7 school days leave of absence to ensure that their school year attendance is at least 96%.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their

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responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education - every lesson counts. Pupil attendance sheets will be given out at pupil/teacher consultations after the February half term and at the annual school report.

Attendance Awards

The school awards annual attendance certificates from Hertfordshire County Council for those pupils with 100% attendance, and those whose attendance is very good.

The registration system

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The registers are safely stored in the School Office, with back up data held offsite. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.