

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

“Inspired by St Joseph, together with Christ,
we learn, we grow, we love.”

This policy will:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Rationale

Regular attendance is important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages.

Under Section 35 of the education Act 1944, a parent, an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age is required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Aims

- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance.
- To raise the educational achievement of all pupils in the school.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level.
- To be consistent in the implementation of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's 96.5% target for attendance.

Absence Procedures:

It is the parent's/carers' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parental contact on the first day of absence is the normal expectation.

If your child is absent the parent/carers must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

On return to school following absence, the child should bring a letter on paper detailing the date of absence and reason for absence which is filed by the class teacher. If an absence is unexplained the school will write to parents for an explanation. **(Appendix 1)**. This must be completed by the parent and immediately returned to school.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Deputy Head/ Learning mentor if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, bereavement, interview at another school, medical/dental appointments (although we encourage you to make these outside of school times) emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not receive a reason or an explanation considered reasonable. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- working, oversleeping
- Looking after brothers and sisters at home
- Non-urgent medical or dental appointments

When explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents should be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent their child(ren) from attending.

Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents.

School refusers:

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

End of the School Day

Children should always be clear about who is collecting them from school. All children should be collected from the playground at the end of the school day at 3:15pm by parents/carers. Parents are asked to telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child so that the child doesn't get anxious.

Nursery pupils are collected from their classroom. Children in Reception, KS1 & KS2 are escorted to the playground by their class teachers.

Children not collected on time are brought back into school and signed into the late book then their parents/carers will be contacted by telephone. On collection a valid reason must be given for the late collection and the child/ren must be signed out.

Independent Travellers

If children are lone travellers, parents should complete an independent traveller form (**APPENDIX 2**) and keep the school updated of any changes. Any changes to normal pick up arrangements should be made in advance. Please only call the school office with changes of pick up arrangements in an emergency.

Parents of Independent Travellers (travelling without an adult), whose children are not attending school (due to illness for example) must contact the school by 9.00am with the reason. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting parents/carers at home or work to ask where the child is. If it is not possible to contact parents/carers the matter will be referred to the local Police. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

St Joseph's School does not approve general holidays to be taken during term time in accordance with the law. Parents wishing to take children out of school during term time must complete an exceptional leave of absence form and may need to speak to the Headteacher. When making a decision on whether a pupil may have leave during term time the Headteacher will consider the child's attendance record, attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Lateness

At St Joseph's we feel that children arriving late in the classroom disrupt both their own and the learning of others. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The school day at St Joseph's is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon with a registration period at the beginning of each.

School opens at 8:40am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 8:50am. All children arriving after 8:50 am must report to the main school office so they can sign the late book with a reason for the lateness. Children arriving after morning registration will receive a late absence mark unless they have a very good reason for being late.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Deputy Head teacher and/or learning mentor to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

All children are expected to have attendance of 96.5% or above. Where a child's attendance is below 96.5% for any reason, including sickness, parents will be sent a letter outlining the amount of school missed. (Attendance letter 1: Appendix 3)

Where a child's attendance falls below 85%, or where there are concerns about a child's attendance patterns or lateness, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Deputy Head which may include the Educational Welfare Officer. (Attendance letter 2 Appendix 4)

The EWO has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents whose children have levels of unauthorised lateness which bring them below the Borough Target for attendance. This process will be initiated by a referral to the EWO from the Deputy Headteacher where there is a concern.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Deputy Head and a possible referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Deputy Head should be informed if any member of staff is concerned about a child's absences – both authorised and unauthorised, or regular late arrivals/collections.

The Deputy Head and Attendance and Punctuality Assistant will carry out half termly monitoring of the attendance and punctuality records to identify any patterns of poor attendance or punctuality.

A meeting may be arranged with the parent/carer, Deputy, Attendance and Punctuality Assistant and the Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet to discuss any issues that may be causing poor attendance or punctuality, and to discuss support where appropriate. Attendance registers are reviewed regularly with the Education Welfare Officer.

Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be dated, named and initialled by the member of staff who receives them. These notes should be kept in the class absence file and are regularly transferred to the child's individual school file at regular intervals. Please note that such documents may be required in legal proceedings.

When pupils return after a period of non-attendance:

How a child is received back in school after a period of poor attendance or unauthorised absence may crucially influence whether he or she is to achieve and maintain an improvement in attendance. The following recommendations are made:

- Pupils should be welcomed back to school, irrespective of why they have been absent. Teachers should avoid misplaced irony when a pupil returns after a period of non-attendance.
- Gentle encouragement and support in organising missed work helps to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed. This should be carefully coordinated beforehand if possible by the Deputy Head, learning mentor and class teacher
- Parents should be actively involved in their child's reintegration. Inviting the parents into school and deciding on joint strategies may achieve this.
- Older pupils might be encouraged to act as helpers, befrienders or mentors to help to promote re-integration.
- Class teachers and tutors should promote within the tutor group a positive atmosphere which is welcoming to the returning pupil.
- Placing a pupil on Attendance Monitoring Report may be supportive in some situations.
- Any internal support structure (for example, special needs

Provision, learning mentor) should be used flexibly.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children 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 Education Authority.

This policy was written by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and ratified by the Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

On: September 2016

Next review date: September 2018



St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School

Watford Way
Hendon
London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8202 5229

Fax: 020 8202 5530

Email: office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re:.....

Under the regulations governing attendance registers, I have to account for any absence of every child. Our records show that on the date(s) listed below, your child was absent from school. We do not appear to have an explanation for the absence and need to complete our records. Would you therefore complete the reply slip and return it to school as soon as possible.

Parents are asked to telephone the school by 9.00am on the first day if your child is going to be absent from school.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Z. Flitton
Deputy Headteacher

Reply Slip

Child’s name:..... Class:.....

Date(s) absent (to be completed by staff member)

.....
.....

Reason for absence (to be completed by parent/carer)

.....
.....
.....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Appendix 2

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Watford Way

Hendon

London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8202 5229

Fax: 020 8202 5530

Email: office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk

Independent Traveller Form

Dear Parent/Carer,

The aim of this letter is to ensure that the school has a record of all children coming to school and going home from school without an adult. Even if you have previously completed this form, I would appreciate it if you could take some time to reconfirm your details. This information enables the office to prioritise pupils in the First Response process, to ensure the safety of independent travellers.

If your child comes to school or goes home without an accompanying adult, you must complete the slip below and return it to school as soon as possible. If an older school age sibling is responsible for ensuring your child attends school, you must complete this form. Please ensure your child does not arrive before 8.40 as the school cannot accept legal responsibility for children before this time. Please enquire about breakfast club if your child needs to be dropped off before 8.40.

If your child will not be attending school on any particular day, (due to illness, for example) please contact the school before 9.00am to advise us of this. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting you at home and/or work to verify the whereabouts of your child.

Yours Sincerely

Miss Z. Flitton
Deputy Headteacher

.....
Childs name..... Class.....

My child is an Independent Traveller and travels to and/or from school alone, or with a school aged sibling. I agree to contact the school by 8.40am if my child is not attending school.

My contact details are as follows:

Home number.....Mobile Number.....

Alternative contact Name.....

Alternative contact number.....

If my child's fails to attend school and I have not contacted the school I understand that the school will make every effort to contact me to confirm the whereabouts of my child. I understand that the school may contact the Police if they are unable to contact me or other responsible adult.

Signed.....Name.....Date.....

APPENDIX 3

ABSENCE LETTER 1:



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Watford Way

Hendon

London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8202 5229

Fax: 020 8202 5530

Email: office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

«forename» «surname» «reg»

I am concerned that «forename»'s attendance was ...% last half term and he/she has not been attending regularly.

Whilst I am aware that illness is something that cannot be helped, the required government attendance is a minimum of 95%. It has been proven that poor attendance leads to lower achievement, so if they are not here they really do miss out! Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet automatically notes low attendance and they have requested that I contact you initially to ascertain why your child's attendance is not at the required level.

I hope that «his/her» attendance improves over the next half term. If you are experiencing problems at the moment, I am happy to discuss this with you in order to support your child's attendance.

Should your child's attendance show no improvement you will be asked to attend a meeting with myself or Mrs Ciapryna to try to rectify the situation before any Education Welfare involvement is necessary.

Yours sincerely

Miss Z. Flitton
Deputy Headteacher

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

I understand that the school is concerned that my child's attendance is below 95% and will work in partnership with the school to improve my child's attendance.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4

ATTENDANCE LETTER 2:



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Watford Way

Hendon

London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8202 5229

Fax: 020 8202 5530

Email: office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk

Date:

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

«forename» «surname» «reg»

Further to our last letter concerning «forename»'s attendance. I am concerned that it remains below the 95% government requirement. I have calculated «his_her» percentage attendance as «percentage_attendance» % a figure that, I am sure you will agree, is a cause for concern. At St Joseph we expect «his_her» attendance to be above 95%.

Attendance is very important and research shows a clear correlation between achievement and attendance at school. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

I would be grateful if you could meet with me and our learning mentor as soon as possible, to discuss how we could work together to support «forename» in an attempt to improve «his_her» attendance. This in turn will have a major impact on «his_her» progress in «his_her» studies in the coming months.

Consistent poor attendance will be reported to the Barnet's Education Welfare officer. This will be monitored closely and you could be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next week. If you fill in the reply slip below, I will get back to you as soon as possible. Should you fail to attend this appointment I will have no option but to forward your details to the Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet.

Yours Faithfully

Miss Z. Flitton
Deputy Headteacher

Name of Child: _____

Class: _____

I would like to arrange a time to speak to you about my child's attendance.

Before School Date: _____

After School Date: _____

I have already spoken to you about my child's attendance

Signed: _____

APPENDIX 5

REGULAR LATE ARRIVAL LETTER



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Watford Way

Hendon

London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8202 5229

Fax: 020 8202 5530

Email: office@stjosephs.barnet.sch.uk

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re:.....

We are concerned that your child has arrived late for school on several occasions recently.

I would like to remind you that all children must be in school by 8:50 am as is the official start of the school day. Children can come into school from 8:40 am or alternatively they can attend our breakfast club at 7.50am.

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives 30 minutes after the register has been taken, they will have an "unauthorised" late mark – this is the same as an "unauthorised absence"

Late arrivals are noted in the register and on school reports. They are also monitored on a regular basis by the Education Welfare Officer for the London Borough of Barnet.

If there is a difficulty, perhaps you would like to discuss the matter with me in order to improve your child's punctuality.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Z. Flitton
Deputy Headteacher

Name of Child: _____

Class: _____

I understand that the school is concerned about my child's punctuality and will work in partnership with the school to improve my child's punctuality.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

REFERRAL INFORMATION

Child Surname		Child Forename		Date of Birth	
				Gender	
Parent/Guardian	<i>(name / status)</i>		<i>(name / status)</i>		
Address		<i>(new address / date of change)</i>		<i>(new address / date of change)</i>	
Tel / other contact	<i>(home)</i>	<i>(work)</i>		<i>(mobile)</i>	
Absent Parent	<i>(name / status)</i>		<i>(address)</i>		
School		<i>(new / date of change)</i>		Current	
				Year Group	
Known siblings (name / school)	1	2	3	4	
Referral Source			Allocated EWO		
Important Notes (Eg LAC, SEN, Medical condition, spoken language)	<i>(date, note)</i>				

It is essential that families have an opportunity to address their children's attendance concerns with the school prior to referral to the Education Welfare Team. Therefore, the following course of action should be followed in order to aid this process.

Family contacted in writing requesting an appointment to meet with them to discuss their child's attendance.

Copies of letters to the family enclosed. *(Referrals will not be actioned without this evidence).*

Family notified of school's intention to stop authorising absences on medical grounds unless there is formal medical evidence (e.g. GP note).

Family notified of school's intention to refer the matter to the EWO.

Attendance certificate enclosed