



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement

We follow in Jesus' footsteps as we care for each other when we work, play and pray.

Attendance Policy

St John Paul II Multi-Academy is committed to creating a culture of belonging to ensure all children feel valued and respected to live out their vocation. We believe that all children deserve to be in school every day and we recognise that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that this happens. To enable this, we will:

- create safe learning environments where all children can thrive
- ensure attendance is **everyone's** responsibility
- have clear systems and processes to monitor, analyse and improve attendance
- work in partnership with families to find supportive routines to remove barriers to excellent attendance
- provide early, targeted intervention to key groups where attendance is becoming a concern

Mrs Chambers (Head of School) is the Senior Attendance Champion with Miss Evans as the Attendance Champion with support from the Attendance Officer – Mrs Hollender and Mrs McGovern in the front office. They will usually be the people you contact/contacts you in relation to your child's attendance. They can be contacted via email on enquiry@stjosutton.net.

The Local Governing Board and staff at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become



emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. As a Catholic school we regard every individual as unique and special in God's family. It is important for all children to regularly attend school on time irrespective of gender, religion, cultural background and ability, to ensure they make the best of their God-given talents and skills. Attendance will be encouraged through effective communication between pupils, parents/carers and the school. If attendance falls below expectation, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will use Birmingham City Council's 'Support First' attendance procedures to encourage improvements in attendance:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/29520/support_first_school_attendance_framework_and_guidance

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement at all levels. Poor attenders are much less likely to achieve their targets and key milestones in primary education.

Attendance %	Days/ lessons missed	Risk
97-100	5 days / 25 lessons	No concern
95-96.9	7.5 days/ 37.5 lessons	Concern
93-94.9	12.5 days/ 62.5 lessons	Risk of underachievement
90-92.9	15 days/ 75 lessons	Severe risk of underachievement
0-89.9	17.5 days/ 87.5 lessons	Extreme risk of underachievement

Legal Framework:

This policy has been written taking into account the following statements from the Education Act;

1. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 'If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence'.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996: 'If you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence.'

Keeping children safe in education (2024) suggests that Children Missing from Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education).

Aims of this policy:

- To safeguard the welfare of pupils
- To encourage parents/carers to take an active role in the attendance of their children.
- To promote a culture across the school which encourages excellent attendance and punctuality, which prepares pupils for life after school.
- To develop effective systems of communication between home and school
- To recognise and reward excellent and consistent attendance.
- To utilise the effective attendance practice framework to encourage excellent attendance across the school.

The emphasis of our approach is on developing a school culture and climate of belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- Increase school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism
- Ensure attendance is well managed and the appropriate level of resources are allocated to attendance procedures
- To make informed use of attendance data to target interventions

The foundations of our attendance practice are;

- To embed an ethos in which excellent attendance is expected, developed and nurtured
- To have clear systems and processes to improve attendance
- To have a team of attendance experts working with a shared vision and core purpose
- To implement targeted intervention for key groups/ demographics, where data shows attendance is concerning
- To ensure that rewards are utilised to encourage attendance and support a culture of belonging.

Absence Procedures:

Reporting Absences

Parents are required to inform the school through the 'My Child At School' App (MCAS), telephone call or enquiry inbox at the earliest opportunity (preferably before 9.30 am) each day explaining the reason for their child's absence. The school operates a 'first day response' initiative. We will always contact you by calling you if we have not received contact from parents/carers on MCAS, telephone or email.

Where we have on-going concerns regarding your child's attendance, or your child's attendance has fallen into 'cause for concern,' we may visit your home address and/or write to you. We may even invite you to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. If we cannot make contact with you, we will continue to make announced and unannounced home visits, regarding any concerns we may have surrounding attendance at school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

Punctuality

Gates open for children at 08:35am, the class register will close at 09.00 am. The main gates close at 8.45am and any child arriving after this time will need to be brought to the office and be signed in by a parent/carers. This is to ensure they are marked as being present in school in case the register has already been sent by the class teacher. The office closes the register at 9.05am. Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as late (L code). Late marks will not be authorised and will count as an absence for the school AM session. If a child arrives at school from 09:15am they will be U coded. A U code is classed as an unauthorised absence. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if a child has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example they woke up late

or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

If persistent poor punctuality occurs, the 'Support First' attendance protocol will be followed as outlined for persistent absentees below.

For children where there are concerns an individual punctuality report is generated and a letter will be sent to the parents.

Following this letter, if there is no improvement in punctuality, a meeting will be arranged, where the school will discuss what can be done to support the family.

Punctuality at the end of the day is equally important. School finishes at 3.15pm for KS2 pupils and 3.20pm for EYFS and KS1 pupils. Children should be collected on time. Waiting and not knowing why parents/carers are late can cause anxiety for children especially when they see that every member of the class has been collected on time and has gone home.

Attendance and absence codes

On each occasion the register is taken, the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence. As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education', pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.

The full list of codes can be found in [Working together to improve school attendance](#), and in Appendix 1.

Unauthorised absence

Where absence is occurring which has not been agreed by the school, this will be marked as unauthorised. Definitions of unauthorised absence are:

- Truancy (including internal truancy)
- Parentally condoned absence without good reason
- Holidays in term time (also referred to as Leave in Term Time/LITT)
- Absence without medical evidence following a Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM)
- Leaving school early for a weekend getaway
- Helping the family (e.g. looking after children, parent sick)
- Family occasions (e.g. meeting someone at the airport)
- Having a haircut... Going shopping for shoes, clothes, etc...
- Anything which can be avoided
- A child's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform

- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease
- Head lice – let the school know and letters will then be sent to all parents in a confidential manner

Unauthorised absences will trigger internal monitoring of attendance and may result in the 'Support First' attendance protocol being initiated.

Authorised Absence

What circumstances would normally be considered as authorised?

- Illness that makes your child really unable to come to school (not just having a cold or a slight headache). This also includes illnesses that are linked to your child's Mental Health when confirmed by a medical practitioner.
- If your child keeps being ill, then he/she must see a doctor and you must bring in a medical note. This also includes illnesses that are reported as concerns for your child's Mental Health.
- A child with repeated patterns of illness will be referred to the School Nurse/ Doctor.
- One day for each main festival of your child's religion.
- A family crisis (e.g. a death in the family).
- One day for a very special family event (e.g. a wedding).

Persistent absence

When a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, the Attendance Champion or the Senior Attendance Champion will have conversations with pupils for safe and well checks. Parents will also be contacted to discuss concerns and support will be offered where appropriate. An Early Help referral will be offered and support put in place to encourage improvement in the pupils' attendance. If absence continues and thresholds are met, staged letters will be sent and parents may be invited for a Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM). If this is not successful in improving attendance, referrals to the Education Legal Intervention Team will be made in accordance with the 'Support First' Attendance protocol.

Children missing from education

If a child is persistently absent without contact from parents/carers, school staff will make every effort to make contact with the child's family. If families do not respond to home visits/ phone calls and letters, a referral to the Children Missing from Education Team will be made.

If the school is concerned about the child's safety or well-being, a Designated Safeguarding Leader will contact CASS immediately and an Early Help Request Referral will be made.

Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888

Requesting authorised absences

Pupils will not be given authorisation to take authorised leave except in exceptional circumstances. It is very unlikely that requests for holidays or other leave will be authorised but if parents want the school to consider such a request they must complete a request for leave form and return it to the office for the attention of the Executive Principal. There is a separate form for families requesting leave in term time.

Leave during Term Time

From 1 September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Head teachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances' only. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School observes Birmingham City Councils 'Leave in Term Time Guidance for schools and Academies'.

Parents wishing to apply for leave during term time must ask for a 'Request for Pupil Leave of Absence' form from the school office. All sections of the form must be completed returned for the attention of the Executive Principal or Head of School before making any arrangements. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being coded as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis.

If a child fails to return and contact with the parent has not been made or received, school may take the child off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration, England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the child is still absent from school, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may consider legal action.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence be agreed. In such cases, consideration will be given to the cultural needs and the family circumstances. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time.

Long Term Absences

Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of unexplained absences longer than 2 weeks.

Parents taking their children out of school for unauthorised or unexplained absences for longer than 4 weeks may result in them being taken off the school roll. The admission committee of the school has responsibility for making this decision, taking the advice of the Executive Principal and the Local Authority. The Local Authority must be fully informed of this action.

Dealing with attendance concerns

The Attendance registers and data kept on the main Administrative Computer are examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence or poor punctuality, the Attendance Champions will write to parents in order to ascertain the reason for persistent absence or poor punctuality. Details of attendance or percentages of late arrivals to school are extracted from the computer database. The Attendance Champions will show this to the parent(s).

Where there are any concerns regarding attendance, a letter is written to parents notifying them of concerns over attendance and the need to improve.

If attendance does not improve following this, or if attendance is on or below 90%, parents are asked to meet with school leaders, in school, to discuss strategies for improvement. If appropriate, the school may refer parents to the appropriate agencies for further advice, support or actions.

Following the meeting if there is still no improvement a School Punctuality Review Meeting will be arranged involving Governors.

National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence:

The new regulations came into effect on 19th of August 2024.

The aim is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

The national framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. The 10-week period may span different terms or school years. For example, two sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further eight during the autumn term.
- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at £80.
- A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal interventions).

Strategies for Maximising Attendance

Government research has shown that children's attendance relates directly to their achievements. Any attendance that is below 95% is a cause for concern. The school ask that all parents/carers aim for 100% attendance.

The school consider attendance in the following way:

100%	Excellent
99% - 97%	Very Good
96% - 95%	Satisfactory
Less than 95%	Cause for concern

Individual postcards and celebratory messages are presented to pupils who have made progress in their punctuality and attendance.

Attendance and punctuality will be promoted daily in class, and celebrated through assemblies and in the newsletter. Attendance is reported to Governors in the Leadership Report.

If a child's attendance level drops below 95%, the class teacher will highlight that it is becoming a cause for concern. The class teachers will speak to the children about their individual attendance and to parents via phone call or in person, to encourage the child and family to take steps to improve the child's attendance. The Attendance Champions and Senior Leadership Team will commence close monitoring of that child's attendance level. The school will send home the most recent attendance printout along with a letter of support for parents.

If it continues to drop and falls below 90%, the Attendance Champions or SLT will make contact with the child's parent/carers and a 'cause for concern' letter will be sent home and Early Help support will be offered.

Following prolonged absence below 90%, formal procedures following the BCC Support First school attendance framework will be implemented starting with a Formal Attendance Meeting (FAM) and leading to contact with the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) if the child continues to be persistently absent due to unauthorised absence. Legal action will be considered and may be taken as stated above. This will include:

- Penalty notices – a penalty of £80 or £160 depending on how soon payment is made.
Applicable to both parents.
- Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence.
- Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence.

See Appendix 2 for an overview of the attendance procedures for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, including the quick reference guide to BCC Support First school attendance framework and guidance.

Monitoring attendance

Teachers will:

- Record attendance accurately
- Promote attendance within the class
- Provide pastoral support alongside the Attendance Champions where attendance becomes a concern
- Discuss attendance with members of their class individually
- Raise falling attendance and attendance causing concern with parents on the gate, at Parents' Evenings or via phone call and log that the contact has been made

Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Champion, supported by the Senior Leadership team will:

- Mrs Chambers is the Senior Attendance Champion in school and Miss Evans is the attendance champion - they will work alongside all stakeholders to promote excellent attendance in school
- Be responsible for closely analysing all attendance data and reasons for student absence so effective support can be offered
- Implement the 'Support First' school framework when thresholds have been met due to attendance that is causing concern
- Ensure letters are sent at each threshold stage of the 'Support First' framework
- Complete Early Help referrals for families where appropriate when attendance becomes a concern
- Track the attendance of pupils on reduced or part time timetables.

Attendance officers:

- Ensure all registers have been completed and absences recorded accurately
- Use 'My Child At School' APP/phone calls to contact a parent/carer who has not informed the school of the non-attendance, requesting they contact the school.
- Support the attendance champions with the administrative side of the 'Support First' framework
- Attend admin meetings where a review of whole school attendance and persistent absences are discussed
- Promote positive attendance in the school's weekly newsletter

Designated safeguarding leads will:

- Ensure that pupils with poor attendance and/or poor punctuality are placed on the “Children with a vulnerability or safeguarding concern” list

Parents/carers will:

- Encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with their children
- Inform the school via telephone call if their son/daughter cannot attend school and give a clear reason
- Inform the school if their son/daughter develops a medical condition that requires a reasonable adjustment from the school – this also includes medical conditions linked to your child’s Mental Health. If this occurs, a meeting may take place between school and home to produce a risk assessment for pupils
- If my child arrives at school after the gates close, ensure the correct procedures are followed to sign your child in so that the reason for their lateness is recorded
- Ensure that if their child needs to leave school for a medical appointment, they must follow the correct procedures for informing the school so that the correct reason for absence is recorded

Children will:

- All children should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards and recognition
- All children are expected to be on the school site on time and ready to learn. Children are expected to be punctual to all lessons and registration
- Children must not leave school without permission, ‘truant’; this will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding concern as well as a Health and Safety concern

Barriers to attendance

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School recognises that there will be barriers to attendance including mental and physical illness. The school will work to offer support to pupils in these circumstances through offering internal support and referrals to external agencies.

While leaders should apply the school’s policy fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance should be considered, along with the schools’ obligations under the:

Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Safeguarding and supporting policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies; safeguarding and child protection policy, the behaviour and care policy and the SEND and accessibility policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance codes will be utilised from the Department for Education found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Appendix 2:

**St Joseph's
Attendance Procedures**

BCC Support First school framework and guidance:

'Support First' reflects the model of attendance intervention outlined in 'Working together to improve school attendance' where all partners should work together to...

Consistently 'good' attendance/punctuality – Praise postcards sent home

Improved attendance/punctuality – celebration message sent home via BromCom

Below 95% attendance – class teacher highlights to the parents/carers that the child's attendance is falling below the expected % - support is offered following 'Support First' principles – where attendance continues to fall, phase leaders will make contact.

Below 93% attendance – Miss Evans and/or SLT will make contact to offer support. If the child's absence is linked to frequent illness and/or medical appointments, parent/carers may be asked to provide evidence so further support can be offered.

Below 90% – increased cause for concern with attendance – A 'Cause for Concern' attendance letter will be sent home. An informal attendance meeting will take place where Early Help will be offered and support will be facilitated by the Attendance Champions. Mrs Chambers as Senior Attendance Champion will begin to get involved. Increased monitoring of the child's absence for safeguarding purposes. Home Visits as safe and well checks may take place if absence continues.

Prolonged absence below 90% - Formal procedures following BCC 'Support First' guidance implemented. Parents/Carers will be invited for a 'Formal Attendance Meeting' (FAM)/ Attendance contract shared and agreed by home/school. Further unauthorised absences may then lead to a referral to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT).

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

