

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Mission Statement

To follow in Jesus' footsteps, caring for each other when we work, play and pray.

This attendance policy:-

- reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole staff;
- was discussed, written and agreed by the whole staff;
- has been approved by the Governing body.

The implementation and ownership of this policy is the responsibility of the whole staff.

The overall accountability and effectiveness of the policy will be the responsibility of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team.

Introduction

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that all children have rights as outlined in the UN Convention. As duty bearers, we have the responsibility to respect these rights and are committed to supporting our children through their education and to ensure that they are rights-holders. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School takes a committed and professional approach to the safety, welfare and happiness of the children in our care. 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.

We believe that attendance and punctuality are a shared responsibility between the school, the parents and the pupils themselves, supported by the Local Authority and MAC as necessary. It is essential that parents support their children in attending and receiving what they need from school.

Objectives

We believe regular attendance and punctuality is important so our objective is:

- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community– teachers, parents and pupils.
- To prevent absenteeism as it leads to underachievement.
- To promote punctuality so that lessons can begin on time without interruptions which helps everyone to learn.
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To promote attendance and punctuality as achievements; future employers value these as indicators of reliability.
- To promote effective partnership with the school and other agencies.
- To use outside agencies as appropriate and to best effect.
- To achieve 97%+ attendance and 100% punctuality.

Attendance Policy Statement

To ensure our children derive maximum benefit from the educational opportunities available to them, we believe it is imperative for children to attend school regularly and punctually. This attendance policy identifies the approach of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School to promote and improve attendance and punctuality; ultimately raising standards.

Organisation – Attendance Register

School starts at 8.45 am and ends at 3.20 pm. All Classes maintain an Attendance Register using SIMS which is marked twice daily; morning registration closes at 9.00 am and afternoon registration closes at 12.45pm KS1/ 1.35pm KS2.

Organisation – Punctuality & Lateness

The Governors and staff feel that punctuality is very important. Children who are late cause disruption to the staff and other children in the class, more importantly it is embarrassing for the child and is disruptive to their education.

Once the school gates have been closed and the school bell has rung at 8.45am the children are deemed late. Pupils/Parents must then report to the Reception Office to sign their child in using the computerised InVentry system which automatically feeds into our SIMS register system.

Punctuality is monitored at school according to local procedures. A daily check is made on punctuality by school office staff. When a child is late they are admitted through the main entrance only and their name recorded on InVentry. This information is then transferred onto the School Information Management System SIMS and is kept on the individual pupil record.

For children where there are concerns an individual punctuality report is generated, this is sent with a letter 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.

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

Punctuality at the end of the day is equally important. School finishes at 3.20 pm for all children. 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.

Organisation - Attendance

A daily check is made on attendance by school office staff in the following way:

- Parents/carers must inform the school on the first day when a child is absent, giving the reason.
- Parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence if they have not informed the school.
- Absence codes are entered throughout the week for any children where reasons have been given.
- Any child for whom an acceptable reason for absence has not been supplied will be marked unauthorised.

This helps to identify any unauthorised absences along with patterns and trends in any absences.

Communicating Absences

Parents are required to inform the school by a telephone call before 9.30 am each day or give written correspondence explaining the reason for their child's absence. Parents are encouraged to leave a message on the school answer phone or email the school office on enquiry@stjosutton.net. The school operates a 'first day response' initiative. In the event of a child being absent and no explanation received by a telephone call or written correspondence, the office will contact parents by telephone to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. Where an explanation is not obtained then further telephone contact is made from the school, followed by a letter.

Leave of Absence

All requests for leave of absence (other than sickness) must be made in writing using the relevant school form.

DfE regulations state that the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are some examples of exceptional circumstances in the DfE guidance but this is not an exhaustive list. Under their discretionary responsibilities, the Principal considers each request on a case by case basis before a decision is made whether to authorise. The Principal also determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

What circumstances would normally be considered authorised?

- ✓ Illness that makes you really unable to come to school (not just having a cold or a slight headache).
- ✓ If your child keeps being ill, then he/she must see a doctor and you must bring in a medical note.
- ✓ 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).

What circumstances would normally be considered UNAUTHORISED?

- Leaving school early for a weekend getaway.
- Any holiday during school time.
- 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.

The school will decide whether to authorise a child's absence. If the school thinks that the absence could have been avoided, then it will not be authorised. It is the school who authorises absences, not the parents/carers.

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 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 Principal 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 Principal will show this to the parent(s).

Where there are any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality (E.g. if attendance is below 95% and/or there is persistent lateness), 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.

This school does not routinely issue fines for parents for their child's poor attendance. However, in circumstances where a child's attendance is still causing concern after the above actions, a fixed penalty notice or prosecution will be considered.

Holidays during Term Time

DfE regulations state that the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There are some examples of exceptional circumstances in the DfE guidance but this is not an exhaustive list. Under the discretionary responsibilities, the Principal considers each request on a case by case basis before a decision is made whether to authorise.

The Principal determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. On application for a lengthy period of absence, the Principal will fully explain that in the event of the child not returning to school on the agreed date, the child may lose their place.

If your application is considered, but not granted, you will be informed. If authorisation has not been agreed but your child is taken out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. You will receive a letter informing you that if your child has not returned to school four weeks after the first date of absence your child will be taken off the school roll.

This school does not routinely issue fines for parents taking holidays or leave during term time. However, in circumstances where a child's attendance is still causing concern after the above actions, a fixed penalty notice or prosecution will be considered.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence. It is not usually necessary for whole days to be taken for appointments - so children should attend for the rest of the day where possible.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

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 certificates will be presented annually to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance during the whole academic year.

Attendance and punctuality will be promoted daily in class, through assemblies and in the newsletters.

Attendance is reported to Governors in the Principal's Report.

If a child's attendance level drops below 95%, the Principal /SLT will commence close monitoring of that child's attendance level. The school will send home the most recent attendance printout along with the '*How good is your child's attendance?*' guide. The class teachers will speak to the children about their individual attendance and to parents at Parents' Evening to encourage the children to take ownership of their own attendance.

If a child's attendance drops below 95%, the Principal will write to the parents, continue to monitor and then invite them to a meeting if there are still concerns.

If it continues to drop and falls below 90%, the Principal will consult with the Education Welfare Officer and letters will be sent to parents inviting them to meet with school and Education Welfare.

The Governors have agreed to work with the Education Welfare Officer/Education Legal Intervention Team and regular poor attendees will be targeted under the '*FAST-track to Attendance*' campaign. Parents will be made aware of this process via the newsletter and through individual letters to parents where attendance is a concern.

If there is still cause for concern, then legal action will be considered and may be taken. This will include:

- Penalty notices – a penalty of £60 or £120 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.

Deletion of pupil from school roll

A pupil is deleted from the school roll if s/he is registered as a pupil of another school or if an absence exceeds the authorised period given for an Extended Leave of Absence. The school will **NOT** remove a pupil from roll where there is no known destination without consultation with Education Welfare Services/Education Legal Intervention Team.

Children 'Children Missing from Education' (Formerly 'Left School No Trace')

If the school believes a child has left St Joseph's Catholic Primary School but there is no record of them being taken on roll at another school, then the school would refer to the Local Authority 'Children Missing from Education' team for advice and support. School would then follow the current guidelines and procedures.

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7690/cme_policy_final_september_2021.pdf

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

Monitoring & Evaluation

Attendance Data will be evaluated termly. The impact of communication with parents – including letters sent home and discussion on patterns of attendance and punctuality – are evaluated termly by the SLT, with the assistance of the Office Staff in the light of data collated. The SLT will evaluate the effectiveness of attendance and punctuality following intervention and the impact this appears to have upon improving attendance and punctuality.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy written, agreed and ratified by the Full Governing Body October 2022

To be reviewed in October 2023

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Attendance Procedures in line with FAST-track to Attendance

1. School attendance letter sent out to all parents at the start of the new academic year via Parent Mail. The letter will be included in the St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Prospectus, the New Parent Induction Pack and be published on the school website.
(Whole School General Attendance Letter – Appendix 1)
2. Monitor whole school attendance figure on SIMS each half term – Target 97%
 - Monitor attendance figures on SIMS each half term to identify any individual pupils who have fallen below:
 - 95% (Cause for Concern)
 - 90% (Persistent Absence)
 - Monitor the attendance figures of our disadvantaged pupils on SIMS each half term.
 - Monitor the attendance figures of our SEND pupils on SIMS each half term.
3. Appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) to deal with attendance. Our DLP is the Principal.
4. Any pupils identified by the monitoring above will be added to our 'Vulnerable Pupil' list for DSL's to monitor.
5. Any pupils identified will receive a concern letter.
(Principal Concern Letter – Appendix 2)
6. If no improvement, DLP calls a formal 'School Attendance Review Meeting' (SARM) with the parents.
(Invitation to SARM Letter – Appendix 3)
7. Complete attendance review form at SARM with the parents.
(FAST-track School Attendance Review Form – Appendix 4)
8. If further absence continues, DLP will issue a formal warning notice. You must attach a copy of the Parent Information leaflet.
(FAST-track Formal Warning Notice – Appendix 5)
(FAST-track School Attendance Legal Action – Information for Parents – Appendix 6)
9. If there are 10 further absence sessions in the academic year after the formal warning letter, the DLP will complete a referral to Birmingham Local Authority Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) using the online referral form.

Leave in Term Time/FAST-track referral form



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St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Little Sutton Lane, Sutton Coldfield B75 6PB

E: enquiry@stjosutton.net

T: 0121 354 6270

W: www.stjosutton.net

Principal: Mr G. O'Hara

Appendix 1



School Attendance – a very important message for all parents/carers - September 2022

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Parents - Please Read

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is an important update about school attendance for the 2022/23 academic year.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and St. John Paul II Multi Academy are working in partnership with parents and Birmingham City Council to ensure all children return to school following some difficult previous years. We would like to thank parents for the work you have done in ensuring your children received education during that time.

It is now vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We also know that when not in school, children missed being with their friends and the wider social aspects of school.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. ***Therefore, the government has confirmed that school attendance continues to be compulsory.***

This means that (*unless parents are formally notified of new lockdown arrangements where schools are closed or a child is required to self-isolate*), the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to send their child/children to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the option for local authorities to again consider the use of legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court.

If you are worried about your child/children attending school the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school has staff who may be able to help, and all schools work closely with health and council teams who may also be able to help if needed.

Please note that, given the disruption to children's education caused by the pandemic, requests for leave during term time are unlikely to be authorised by the Principal.

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members.

No school or local authority wants to take legal action. Every attempt to resolve parents' concerns and improve a child's attendance will be made before any formal legal action, which may include a penalty notice or court action, is instigated.

However, where all efforts fail and parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly, legal action may be considered.

Birmingham City Council provides online information and guidance to parents on school attendance which you can access here:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/1502/school_attendance_advice_for_parents

We wish you and your child/children all the best for this new academic year.

Kind regards,

Education Legal Intervention Team
Birmingham City Council

Mr Gerry O'Hara
Principal



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Appendix 2

Attendance Concern Letter

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»

«AddressLine1»

«AddressLine2»

«City»

«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»

I am writing to you to express concern about «ChildFirstName» attendance in school.

Their attendance for this academic year so far is _____.

As you may be aware, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure children attend school regularly.

We work with parents/carers to help improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work.

Evidence shows that attendance does affect a child's learning and attainment.

Having an attendance record of 90% is the equivalent to missing a half day's teaching every week. A record nearer to 80% is the equivalent of missing one full day every week. All children should aspire to have an attendance as near to 100% as is possible.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently and to inform the school. If your concerns relate to COVID-19 we can provide support and advice. If there are other difficulties affecting your ability to ensure your child attends school regularly that you would like support with, we may be able to help and offer an Early Help Assessment so please contact us urgently to arrange a meeting.

To support your child and to improve their attendance, a staff member will be contacting you to arrange a mutually convenient time via our school office to have a phone call meeting with you to discuss your child's attendance and to establish if we can offer any support to assist in improving their attendance.

This letter is to work in partnership with you to support your child to meet their full potential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

G M O'Hara
Principal



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Appendix 3

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»

«AddressLine1»

«AddressLine2»

«City»

«PostCode»

FAST-track to Attendance Invitation to a School Attendance Review Meeting

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»Yr «YearGroup» at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

There have been continuing difficulties concerning the attendance of your child «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» at «SchoolName».

To assist you, the school have tried to engage with you to offer additional support such as Early Help to improve «ChildFirstName»'s attendance and prevent the need for legal action.

In an attempt to resolve issues regarding attendance, a formal School Attendance Review Meeting has been arranged at «SchoolName» on «AppointDate» at «AppointTime».

It is very important that you attend. Your co-operation is essential.

This meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss any matters of concern. If you now require Early Help, you must attend the meeting after which an assessment can be arranged.

Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence could result in you being prosecuted in court or a penalty notice being issued.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444, Education Act 1996).

Please contact me urgently on the telephone number provided if you are unable to attend. If I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

G M O'Hara
Principal



Appendix 4

School Attendance Review Meeting Record Sheet

Meeting held on:

At:

Attended by:

.....

Introduction

Thank you for attending this School Attendance Review Meeting. The meeting will provide you with the opportunity to explain why your child/ren has/have had unauthorised absence. *(if there is more than one child in the family, record information on separate sheets from page 2 onwards).*

Child Name: DOB: Address:	Child Name: DOB: Address:
Parent/Carer Name: DOB: Address: Relationship to child/ren:	Parent/Carer Name: DOB: Address: Relationship to child/ren:

If only one person attends the SARM:

Do you have a partner who lives at this address? If so what is their name?

Parent/Carer Name:

DOB:

Relationship to child/ren:

For a parent who lives at a different address from child/ren describe all contact they have with child (how often/do they stay overnight/are they involved regarding their child/ren's education, etc...):

“You now have an opportunity to explain why your child has poor attendance. I am going to ask you some questions. Please answer them as fully as possible.”

(Note that it is acceptable for staff to assist parents in answering the questions if necessary)

1. What actions have you taken to get your child to attend School?

2. Are there **any other reasons at all**, such as difficulties at home, housing problems, illness or disability issues, relationship or behaviour difficulties etc., which you think may be affecting your child's ability to attend School regularly?

Y N

If yes, could you please outline the difficulties the family is experiencing?

Would you like some assistance from relevant services in order to help to resolve these difficulties via an Early Help Assessment?

Y N

3. Has your child been too ill to attend school for reasons including COVID-19 on some or all of these periods of absence? (Show copy of attendance printout)

Y N

If yes:

What illness has the child had? If the absences were due to COVID, do you have a copy of the positive test results please?

If illness absence is not COVID related, have you taken your child to a GP or Consultant? Y N

What advice did they give you?

Do you have medical evidence i.e. a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note (not required), medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of a prescription, print screen of medical notes, letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence? **Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern.**

If a doctor has not been consulted, why not? Y N

Do you consent to a school nurse referral if needed? Y N

If yes, what is the name of your child's GP and which surgery are they registered with please?

If no, what is the reason for this?

4. Are any other agencies or professionals (involved with) working with your family? Y N

If yes, who are they and what work are they doing with your family?

5. Are there **any travel issues affecting your** child attending School regularly? Y N

(Discuss transport arrangements at this point if pupil is in receipt of home / school transport)

Action Plan

"We are now going to agree on an Action Plan."

(All paperwork must be **legible and signed, photocopied and a copy given to each parent at the end of the meeting** - all pages of this document. **Send a typed copy of the Action Plan if writing is not easy to read).**

Actions by parent/carer

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, escorting them into school and handing them over to a named person if necessary. **(If the parent is required to hand the child over to a member of staff / School Reception, please record arrangements here:)**
If you are agreeing to a part-time timetable, replace this with details of the integration plan including hours, length (no longer than 6 weeks)
- Contact school on the first day of every absence **before 9.30am** stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.
- Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with medical evidence i.e. an appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a relevant professional, hospital letter concerning appointments, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes or any other medical evidence which enables the Principal to

authorise the absence as illness or medical appointment. School will not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern.

- Contact the school if your child is experiencing any difficulties preventing regular attendance.

Any other actions agreed:

Actions by School

- To respond to parental contact promptly.
- To continue to monitor attendance.
- To complete Early Help assessment (*delete as appropriate*)
- To complete a school nurse referral (*delete as appropriate*)
- To **only** authorise absence due to illness when provided with medical evidence. (Handwritten notes or telephone calls from parents are not acceptable when attendance is of serious concern).

Any other actions agreed:

“Is there any further support we can offer you?”

Y N

Statement

I must advise you that any further unauthorised absence is likely to lead to legal action.

The law states that your child must attend school on every occasion that it is open unless there is a reason that enables the Principal to authorise the absence under the Regulations. The law also states that it is parents’ responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Statement read to the parent(s)

Y N

School representative:

Name:

Signed:

Dated:

Parent Statement

I confirm that I have read these notes and understand the contents of this meeting.

Parent/Carer:

Signed:

Dated:

Parent/Carer:

Signed:

Dated:

‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

Have copies of the School Attendance Review Meeting Record Sheet been given to the parent at the end of the meeting?

Y N



**School Attendance Review Meeting –
Record sheet to be used when parents don't attend the SARM**

Meeting held on:

At:

Child Name: DOB: Address:	Child Name: DOB: Address:
Parent/Carer Name: DOB: Address: Relationship to child/ren:	Parent/Carer Name: DOB: Address: Relationship to child/ren:

Did the parents notify you that they couldn't attend the SARM? If yes, what was the reason given?

Did the parents request the meeting be re-arranged?

Y N

Rearranged date and if the parents attended:



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Appendix 5

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»

«AddressLine1»

«AddressLine2»

«City»

«PostCode»

Fast-track to Attendance Formal Warning Notice

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «Child'sName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup» at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER. TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

Your child/ren, «ChildFirstName» has/have been identified as having poor attendance at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

To assist you, the school have tried to engage with you to offer additional support such as Early Help etc.; have invited you to attend a formal School Attendance Review Meeting; and have provided you with advice to improve your child's attendance.

Despite this, there is now a significant amount of unauthorised absence. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: *'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.*

This is a formal warning notice advising you that the Local Authority may consider issuing a penalty notice/taking legal action against you if there is any further unauthorised absence.

To avoid this, you **must** prevent any further unauthorised absence. You are reminded that you need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any illness absences. Details of the medical evidence required is included on the attached leaflet.

I would strongly advise that you read the attached leaflet which will provide further guidance on getting your child to school and advice as to your legal responsibilities. Most attendance problems can be sorted out by parents. **If your child/ren is/are having any difficulties, please contact the school immediately and ask for an Early Help assessment.**

Yours sincerely,

G M O'Hara
Principal

This leaflet is for only parents/carers whose child/ren's attendance has not improved following offers of support from their child's school, including a formal meeting. **To avoid Legal Action being taken against you for failing to ensure your child/ren attend school regularly, you are advised of the following:**

- Ensure your child attends school every day it is open, on time, escorting them into school if necessary and handing them over to a member of staff. **(Please be aware your child may get an unauthorised absence mark when they arrive after registration closes).**
- Contact school on the first day of every absence by **9.30am** stating the reason for absence and the likely return date.
- Take your child to the doctor if unwell and provide the school with: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. **The Principal will not authorise medical absence without evidence.**

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

Legal Information and outcomes in respect of poor attendance

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school for first offences. (In cases of excessive absence, or repeat offences, whether for ongoing absence or leave in term time, the matter may be referred straight to Court) **The amount of the penalty is £60.**

- **If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.**
- **If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute** under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

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.”

- **The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a victim surcharge, and/or make a Parenting Order.**

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

“If in the above circumstances 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.”

- **The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, impose a victim surcharge and order payment of the prosecution costs.**

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.