

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

I am special in God's eyes

We will be a happy, welcoming school with Christ at the centre, where everyone is recognised as special

"Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by your name,
you are mine.

Because you are precious in my eyes,
because you are honoured and I love you."

Isaiah 43 : 2-5

The aim of the school is to provide a high quality education where children achieve their very best. To do this, we find regular attendance and punctuality are crucial to a child's academic and social progress.

Frequent odd absences, as well as long blocks of absence, disadvantage children because continuity and progression are interrupted. It is worth noting that a child's absence can have disruptive implications for the education of the rest of the class too. We expect children to arrive at school in good time for the morning session, to allow them to communicate with their peers and develop and practise their social skills before formal work begins.

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism. We will work closely with parents should attendance give cause for concern.

The school actively encourages good attendance even for children who are not yet statutory school age.

School Times

The classroom doors open at 8.50 am to welcome children and close at 9.00 am. Children are expected to arrive at school before the bell is rung at 9.00 am. Any children arriving after 9.00 am should be taken to the main entrance. Children are registered at 9.00 am and the register remains open until 9.10 am. Any child arriving after 9.10 am but before 9.30 am is considered late and is marked as such on the register. Any child arriving after 9.30 am is marked as an unauthorised absence unless the school has been notified of reasons for the absence.

Responsibilities

Parents should:

- Ensure their child is brought in and collected from school at the appropriate time
- Provide the reason for any absence by telephone on the first day of absence and in writing on return to the school
- Parents are expected to keep in regular contact with the school for the duration of any absence
- Provide evidence of medical appointments other than emergencies prior to absence

- Seek the permission of governors for planned absences by completing the 'Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence' form before the proposed period of absence. This should in normal circumstances be not less than 4 weeks before the proposed period of absence
- Fulfil the agreement conditions – eg date of child return to school.
- Notify the school if exceptional circumstances prevent a return on the planned date
- Understand that the school can only authorise absence during term time under exceptional circumstances.
- Understand that long term leave of absence can only be taken in extenuating circumstances.
- Understand that the school may not be able to hold a place for a child who is absent beyond 6 weeks.

School will:

- Work with parents to ensure the child is brought to and collected from school at the appropriate time
- Provide support to the child in managing an exceptional leave of absence.
- Liaise with educational welfare/county attendance team where absence is causing concern
- Have the right to request a meeting with parents who apply for leave of absence

Governors

On notification the Governors will decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence from school may be authorised without the need to complete a leave of absence form, if it is for one of the following reasons:

- *Sickness*
- *Unavoidable medical / dental appointments*
- *Days of religious observance*
- *Emergency situations – e.g. exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement.*

Governors will consider leave of absence in exceptional circumstances only. Requests for exceptional leave of absence must be addressed to the Governors of St Joseph's Catholic Infant School via the school office.

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- *Shopping*
- *Birthdays*
- *Holidays*
- *Long Weekend breaks*
- *The needs or convenience of other family members*

The Governors will:

- Maintain a clear positive Attendance Policy which profiles holiday and extended leave issues.
- Communicate the policy regularly to parents; pupils and the community.
- Operate within legislation and LA guidance.
- Refer to Education Welfare Service/County Attendance Team in cases of unauthorised absence which fall within the criteria for referral.

Procedures for Requesting Exceptional Leave of absence

1. Complete the 'Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence' form and return it to the school office (forms can be collected from the school office or downloaded from the school website).
2. Please return the form at least 4 weeks before the proposed period of absence.
3. You may be contacted to discuss the absence request further with the headteacher.
4. You will be notified in writing of the Governing Body decision.

Outcomes of unauthorised absence or high levels of leave of absence

The school is obliged to monitor pupil attendance. Any absence from school is recorded and forms part of the schools overall attendance figures.

Pupils who do not attend school will have their absence recorded and the reason for that absence noted. An attendance report will be shared with parents annually.

Where attendance falls below the expected level the school will contact parents to notify them of this and will actively encourage good attendance.

If the attendance of a pupil remains consistently low or continues to fall it is possible that the parents may be contacted by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)/County Attendance Team who will work with parents to improve attendance. If attendance still does not improve the EWO has the power to fine parents and legal action could be taken.

This Attendance Policy has been agreed by the Governors of St Joseph's Catholic Infant School.

Review Date: June 2023