

# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary

## School



# Attendance and Absence Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 4th September 2025

Signed by:

4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

*N. P. O'Connell*

Acting Headteacher

Date:

4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

*E. M. Lynch*

Chair of governors

Date:

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## **Mission Statement**

*Growing together with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.*

## **Statement of intent**

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Headteacher is Mrs. Philpott and can be contacted via [secretary@stjosephsbracknell.co.uk](mailto:secretary@stjosephsbracknell.co.uk). Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the Headteacher for queries or concerns about attendance.

## **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Headteacher role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The Attendance Officer, Headteacher, is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

#### **Missing education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

### **4. Attendance expectations**

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

#### **Morning**

The school gates open at 8.30am and pupils are expected to play on the supervised playgrounds until the bell is rung at 8.40am. At this point, the children line up at 8.40am and are led to their class by a staff member and registers are taken at 8:45am.

Pupils will have a 20 minute morning break at 10:10am, which will last until 10:30am, and a lunch break at 12:00pm (KS1) 12:10pm (KS2) which will last until 1:10pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers are taken immediately; they are taken again at the start of the afternoon session.

- ✓ Pupils who arrive after 8.45am, must be signed in by the school office as the main gates close at 8.45am.
- ✓ Pupils who arrive between 8.45am and 9.00am and the register has been taken will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L).
- ✓ Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- ✓ Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).
- ✓ Parents/guardians should always telephone the school office on 01344 425246 or send an e-mail (secretary@stjosephsbracknell.co.uk) if their child is not attending school by 9.10am.
- ✓ The School Secretary will telephone parents on the first morning of an absence if notification has not been received.
- ✓ Registers are checked regularly and where there is an unexplained absence, a phone call will be made to the child's contacts. The absence will be marked as unauthorised if no reason is provided.
- ✓ The afternoon register will be marked at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom at this time.

### **Leaving the school site during the day**

- ✓ Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without being in the care of a parent/carer.
- ✓ Parents/carers should arrange medical, dental and other appointments outside of school time unless it is an emergency. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing at the school office the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- ✓ Pupils must be signed out at School Office on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.
- ✓ In the unlikely event that a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to contact the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

### **Lateness**

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to school on time. A child arriving after registration i.e. after 8.45am is disruptive for the class and embarrassing for the child. Vital information is given at the start of the school day and the child's learning may be affected if he/she is not present for the full session. Punctuality is an important life skill. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

A pupil arriving late:

- Should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office.
- Will have their name entered in the late register with the reason for the late arrival.
- Will be sent to/taken to their classroom.

If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety requirements.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. You may be asked for proof of the appointment.

## **5. Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than ten school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Headteacher. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed ten school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, the Headteacher will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **6. Attendance register**

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend

- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code `#` will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **7. Authorising parental absence requests**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

### **Leave of absence**

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing using the school form and where possible at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

## **Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

## **Performances and activities, including paid work**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

## **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least one week advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

## **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least one week in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

### **8. SEND- and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.

- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

## **9. Truancy**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:40am, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. Absent pupils**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms

- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after ten minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## **11. Attendance intervention**

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Headteacher, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Strengthen parental relationships with the school
  - Face to face meeting with parents
  - Having a weekly/ fortnightly/ monthly/ termly review.
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and Analysing Absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the school newsletter.

## **12. Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Headteacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Headteacher will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Headteacher will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

## **13. Persistent absence (PA)**

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.

- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading timely check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IEP (Individual Educational Plan) may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 20% percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

#### **14. Penalty notices and legal intervention**

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the Headteacher will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

### **Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)**

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

### **15. Monitoring and analysing absence**

The Headteacher will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Headteacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half termly basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Headteacher will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Headteacher will also be

responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

## **16. Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Headteacher and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

## **17. Deletions of names from the admission register**

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

### **18. Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is at least 96% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

### Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and Headteacher detailing half termly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils record their attendance in their planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and Headteacher daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96%,
  - the Headteacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
  - the Headteacher also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
  - a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the Headteacher contacts the parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for half a term and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the headteacher and class teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
8. After the half termly monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96%.
9. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four-week , a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

**Leave of Absence Form (LA advised form)**

Please ask the school office for St. Joseph's Catholic Leave of Absence Form.

**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE AHEAD COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING**

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

This School's Attendance Policy is set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following.

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued on school attendance matters

This School, the Local Education Authority and the Government all believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be "exceptional" circumstances that may justify a Headteacher's decision to authorise the absence.

**The explanatory note to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which themselves amend The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006, states:**

**Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application**

This school's Attendance Policy includes the following:

- Any application is to be made in writing, two weeks in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides, using the form headed '*Application for Leave of Absence During Term time.*' These may be obtained from the school office **AND**
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher, or person authorised by the Headteacher to do so, considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances.' Parents will be informed by letter within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice, prosecution, or other legal intervention. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice will be issued to each parent for each child. Fixed Penalty Notices can only be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period.

## **THE CURRENT RATE PER PARENT, PER CHILD IS:**

FIRST FIXED PENALTY NOTICE: Charged at £160.00 if paid within 28 DAYS, reducing to £80.00 if paid within 21 days.

SECOND FIXED PENALTY NOTICE: Charged at a flat rate of £160.00 if paid within 28 days.

If the national threshold is met for a third instance for the same parent in respect of the same child, other legal intervention including prosecution will be considered.

## **PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES SHOULD TERM TIME LEAVE BE TAKEN WITHOUT AUTHORISATION OF THE SCHOOL.**

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following nonpayment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for nonpayment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that child to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

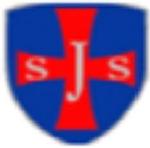
In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund." The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of an adult offender receiving the maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered

by this School's Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £170.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a "Parenting Order," not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a "Parenting Order" or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000.00, and or any other non-imprisonable Sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Note: The term "Parent" is as defined under Section 576 Education 1996, meaning.

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined by the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person



# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Gipsy Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 9AP

Tel: (01344) 425246 Fax: (01344) 305463

Email: head@stjosephsbracknell.co.uk

Headteacher: Juanita Dunlop

## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING AND READ THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FOR GUIDANCE BEFORE COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION.

Under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application

|                         |  |               |  |            |  |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|--|------------|--|
| PUPIL NAME              |  | DATE OF BIRTH |  | CLASS/YEAR |  |
| HOME ADDRESS & POSTCODE |  |               |  |            |  |

|                       |  |                      |  |                          |  |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| FIRST DATE OF ABSENCE |  | LAST DATE OF ABSENCE |  | DATE OF RETURN TO SCHOOL |  | NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT |  |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|

|   |
|---|
| Reason for Leave of Absence Request - <b>THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED</b> |
|   |

| Siblings at other schools |               |                   |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Name                      | Date of Birth | Siblings attended |
|                           |               |                   |
|                           |               |                   |

|  |  |                |  |
|--|--|----------------|--|
| Name of parent that child resides with |  |                |  |
| Mobile phone no.                       |  | Home phone no. |  |
| Email address                          |  |                |  |
| Parent/Carer signature                 |  | Date           |  |

### OFFICE USE ONLY

|                             |        |                                |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>FORM RECEIVED DATE</b>   |        | <b>FORM ASSESSED DATE</b>      |        |
| EXCEPTIONAL REASON ACCEPTED | YES/NO | DATE OF PREVIOUS FPN REQUEST/S |        |
| DECISION LETTER SENT DATE   |        | FPN REQUESTED                  | YES/NO |
| HEADTEACHER SIGNATURE       |        |                                | DATE   |

## BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT- INTERVENTION LEVELS

| <b>BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT- INTERVENTION LEVELS</b>  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>MONITOR</b>   | <b>FACILITATE SUPPORT</b>  | <b>FORMALISE SUPPORT</b>  | <b>ENFORCE</b>  |
| <p><i>Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of absence at individual &amp; cohort level.</i></p>   | <p><i>Remove barriers in school and help pupils &amp; parents to access support to overcome barriers outside of school.</i></p>  | <p><i>If unauthorised absence persists, and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with by families.</i></p>   | <p><i>Where all avenues exhausted, and support is not working or engaged with.</i></p>  |
| <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b></p> <p>Address individual cases or persistent absence using simple processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phone calls/emails,</li> <li>- School website app</li> <li>- Attendance letters.</li> </ul> <p>Request evidence for absences where appropriate.</p> <p>Use a <b>support first approach</b> focused on intensifying support as set out in the <a href="#">Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> that applies from 19/08/2024</p> | <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b></p> <p>Support pupils and parents by working together to address in school barriers to attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting with families in school to understand the barriers that exist.</li> <li>- Agreeing appropriate actions or interventions that can address barriers.</li> <li>- Considering referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.</li> <li>- Implement an Attendance Action Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Where barriers exist outside of school's control, support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All partners working together to ensure pupils and parents can access any support they made need voluntarily.</li> </ul> | <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b></p> <p>Intensify the support provided. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal conversations with parents and pupils to be led by the school attendance champion.</li> <li>- 1-2-1 tuition.</li> <li>- Alternative provision.</li> <li>- Health and care plan.</li> <li>- Where a whole family response is more appropriate, complete an online Early Help assessment.</li> </ul> | <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b></p> <p>Work with the Local Authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put formal support in place – either attendance contract or education supervision order.</li> <li>- Request the issuance of a Notice to Improve from EWS.</li> <li>- Request the issuance of a Fixed Penalty Notice <a href="https://selfservice.mybfc.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/w/webpage/request?service=fixed_penalty_notice_request_from_schools_process">https://selfservice.mybfc.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/w/webpage/request?service=fixed_penalty_notice_request_from_schools_process</a></li> <li>- Intensify support through Children's Social Care where safeguarding is a concern.</li> <li>- Prosecution of parents where all other routes have failed or are deemed inappropriate.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE</b></p> <p>No direct involvement is required.</p>   | <p><b>LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE</b></p> <p>Facilitate termly Targeted Support Meetings with the Education Welfare Officer – SLT to participate.</p>   | <p><b>LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE</b></p> <p>The Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school to attend meetings with parents.</p>   | <p><b>LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE</b></p> <p>EWS to issue Fixed Penalty Notices and instigation of court proceedings.</p>  |