

# Attendance Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



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## 1. Aims

It is our joint responsibility, parents and school, to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

We believe that Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Children should arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Our mission statement reflects our joint commitment as partners in our children's education to develop respect for the school's code of conduct, reinforced through discipline in the home. Parents of registered pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to send children to school regularly, and punctually.

## 2. School Attendance Procedures

### 2.1 Attendance register

Attendance registers are marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Since 1991 regulations include the requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### 2.2 Lateness

We at St Joseph's actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late disrupts not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others.

A firm line is taken with late arrivals. Children will be marked late by the class teacher if they arrive late (i.e. after 8.50am) but before the register is sent to the office. After the register has gone to the office, children arriving late should report to the office and ensure their names are recorded in the Late Book. Parents are contacted by letter if children persistently fail to arrive on time.

If a child arrives after 9.20 am they will be coded as a 'U' which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

### 2.3 Reporting Absences

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence. Parents must notify the school every day of their child's absence.

A written note should be brought by the child on his/her return to school stating reason and date of absence. These are placed in the back of the register and removed regularly to the archives.

Should parents forget to write an explanatory note, a reminder form is sent home. This should be returned to the class teacher and then forwarded to the office, preferably in the register.

If a parent has not informed the school of their child's first day of absence the office will call to ensure that parents are aware that their child is not in school.

### 3. Leave of Absence in Term Time

#### 3.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

School holiday dates are published well in advance and parents are expected to plan and take their family holidays at this time so as not to disrupt their children's education. In exceptional circumstances Head Teachers have discretion to authorise leave in term time but parents should be aware that this is not a legal entitlement.

Taking your child out of school without authorisation from the Head Teacher will result in absence being shown as 'unauthorised' and may result in a referral to The Education Welfare Service and legal action being taken against you.

If you need help or advice to ensure that your child attends school regularly please contact your child's school and/or The Education Welfare Service in the area in which your child's school is situated.

#### 3.2 Time out during a school day

(Medical, Dental Appointments, exams etc.)

A letter with regard to these appointments should be sent to the class teacher. A book is maintained by the office staff for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site. For attendance purposes and for emergency evacuation, parents must sign in and out for their children.

### 4. Home School Agreement

The Home/School Agreement Procedures are given to all new parents to sign on entering the school. The parents keep a copy of this signed agreement at home and the other signed copy is returned to school and held in their child's personal file.

This Home School Agreement supports our home/school partnership programme and ensures that all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

### 5. Roles of the Education Welfare Officer (Surrey County Council)

If a class teacher is concerned about a child's punctuality or attendance, they should raise it with the parent first, then a member of the Leadership Team.

If these concerns persist, the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted by the school and may visit/contact parents.

The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school on a regular basis to monitor registers and follow up concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

### 6. Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence (Including Holidays)

- In line with the guidance from the DfE and Surrey County Council, holidays will not be authorised by the school unless there are exceptional circumstances and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- The Head Teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Penalty Notices are issued separately to each parent/carer in the household and for each child.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

## **6.1 Other Penalty Notices**

In addition, Penalty Notices can be requested for late arrival after the close of registration, on 10 occasions, during a 6 week period.

Penalty Notices may also be considered where there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions during a 6 week period. Unauthorised sessions may include 'U' codes (see 'Lateness' section of this policy).