

Attendance Policy

St. Joseph's School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from education and attendance in school every day. To this end St. Joseph's School will do all it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. Therefore it is essential that;

- Every member of staff makes regular attendance a high priority and conveys the importance of this to parents and pupils.
- The registration system is efficiently maintained
- Attendance is monitored by a member of the admin team, the Parent Support Adviser and the Education Welfare Officer.
- Staff, PSA and EWO liaise over irregularities in attendance
- All absences are recorded, using the codes indicated in the system.

Procedures for marking attendance registers

- The register is a legal document and should be marked accurately at the beginning of each session.
- Registration is closed at 9:10am and 1:00pm. Staff send completed registers to the office and the information is entered electronically to the SIMS system by a member of the admin staff.
- Children are marked late after 9:00 am and 1:00pm and 'minutes late' are recorded

Expectations

Parents and children can expect the following from school.

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason
- Steps taken to ensure good attendance. At the present time this includes the following;
 1. Middlesbrough Council Holiday Guidance
 2. Request for Leave of Absence

The school expects the following from parents;

- To ensure their children to attend school every day
- To contact the school by telephone, in person or by letter each day their child is unable to attend school
- To ensure their child arrives in school on time, but not before the time when the school assumes responsibility

The school expects the following from pupils;

- That they attend school everyday
- That they will arrive in school on time, but not before a time when the school assumes responsibility

Pupils leaving the premises during the school day.

St. Joseph's RC Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- All pupils should be signed out in the 'Early Leavers' book in the Reception area when they are leaving school during the day and report time/reason for absence. They must be accompanied by an adult (aged 16 years or older). Comments will be entered into the MIS system used in school.

In the event that a pupil leaves the premises without permission, the following procedure should be observed.

1. The Headteacher or the PSA should be informed immediately. (The Deputy Headteacher, if the Headteacher is not present.)
2. Contact should be made with the pupil's parent/guardian or the next contact person.
3. If contact cannot be made with the parents or another nominated person, the police will be informed.

Pastoral Leader

The PSA will provide advice and support for both the parents and the school and will;

- Liaise with the admin staff to ascertain reasons for absence
- contact parents to discuss problems with attendance
- make parents aware of their legal responsibility in respect of their child's attendance and punctuality at school.
- where necessary refer to EWO, to arrange ACCs / meetings regarding attendance and punctuality
- carry out home visits for children causing concern.
- Liaise with the EWO for children causing concern
- Liaise with school nursing service for children demonstrating repeated health related absences

Administration Staff

The Admin staff will:

- Liaise with the PSA and EWO for children causing concern
- Provide the first point of contact between parents and school regarding absences
- carry out first day absence calls if no notification has been received
- provide documentation such as electronic register print outs for meetings regarding absence

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher:

Guidance on the Sanctioning/Non-Sanction of Pupil Holidays in School Term Time

Rationale and Status of this document

- The Sanctioning/Non-Sanctioning of holidays in term time is a matter of policy for the LMB and for Headteachers acting on behalf of the LMB. The extent to which the guidance contained is followed is subject to the discretion of Headteachers and Governors.
- This Guidance document has been produced at the request of Headteachers and Governors seeking to secure greater consistency across the LA regarding the sanctioning/non-sanctioning of holidays in term time.
- It is hoped that this document will provide a means for schools to explain to parents why they have adopted a certain standpoint regarding the sanctioning/non-sanctioning of holidays in term time. At the same time, wording is deliberately loose in places to allow schools the greatest flexibility to judge individual cases on merit.

Guidance

- Middlesbrough LA is committed to the notion that 'Every School Day Matters'. Consequently, the LA recommends that schools do not authorise any holidays in school term time unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil(s) who will be absent from school can justify their request based on the occurrence of **exceptional circumstances**.
- Special circumstances should not be considered unless parents/guardians wishing to book a holiday in term time have contacted school to explain the circumstances surrounding the request at least four school working weeks in advance of the first day of the holiday.
- Special circumstances should be judged on merit according to the individual case and will be influenced by factors such as the circumstances of the parent(s) working commitments, religious and/or other cultural considerations, the number of days absence requested and/or special family circumstances.
- Holidays should not be authorised, even if special circumstances have occurred, if one or more of the pupils involved has a track record of high unauthorised absence, high authorised absence without medical justification, or is likely to be designated as a persistent absentee (less than 80% attendance) when final returns are made at the end of HT4. It is reasonable to use data from the previous academic year to predict pupil attendance if a holiday is requested during half term 1 or 2.
- A period of holiday for more than ten school days can only be considered in the light of **exceptional circumstances** occurring which makes it imperative that the pupil(s) attend specific events for family or for other reasons.

If parents proceed with an unauthorised holiday

- Should parents proceed with an unauthorised holiday, resulting in the pupil(s) either falling below minimum school expectations or being designated as a persistent absentee, then the school should make use of appropriate legal powers which are available including parental contracts and via the local authority for issuing of warning letters and fixed penalty notices.

Important Information for Parents

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school every day. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time but the law allows Headteachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact, **e.g. a letter from a parents employer must be provided confirming that there are no alternative dates for holidays.**

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

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Subject to approval at LMB on November 24th 2016

If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the Head Teacher, the expectation is that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the request for leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against you.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a penalty Notice in respect of each child. (i.e. a family with 2 children and 2 parents may be issues with a penalty notice for $4 \times £60 = £240$).

As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Research suggest that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results.

Subject to approval at LMB on November 24th 2016

ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE
DURING TERM TIME (exceptional circumstances only)

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Name of Pupil	
Date of Birth	
Tutor/Year Group	
Address	
Contact Numbers	
Sibling Details (or other Children living in the household)	

I request permission for my child to be absent from school between:	
First Day Absence	
Date of Return	
Total School Days	
Please fully explain the exceptional Circumstances that you would like the Head Teacher to consider (continue of a separate sheet if necessary)	

Declaration

I have read and understood the information about leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should my child take leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature..... Date.....
Parent/Carer

Leave of absence refusal

Re: Request for leave of absence during term time

Dear

Unauthorised Leave of absence in Term Time

Re:

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time but the law allows Head teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Government guidance is clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Head Teacher in advance should they wish to take their child and that if an unauthorised leave of absence if taken during term time a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent for each child, if paid within 21 days of issue, and £120 is paid after 21 days but with 28 days.

On this occasion, I have decided not to refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against you. However, any further unauthorised leave of absence may lead to the matter being referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued against you.

As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Mrs E King
Headteacher

Attendance follow up letter

Dear

I note that the attendance ofis currently% due to your leave of absence in term time.

It is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure their child's attends school regularly Monday – Friday "Education Act 1996".

As a parent you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to be absent from school other than exceptional or unavoidable reason.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs E King
Headteacher

Attendance letter

Our Ref: MR/LK/WL2PHV

Date

Address

Dear (Parents Name)

I note that the attendance of **(Child's Full Name)** has continued to be unsatisfactory. I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since September to date, out of a possible **(Sessions Missed)** school weeks **(Child's Full Name)** has only completed **(Number of Weeks)** full weeks in school. As you will appreciate this is a situation which is far from satisfactory. If this situation continues it will be necessary to call an Attendance Case Conference at the school, the date of which you will be notified in due course.

In the meantime Mrs Rodgers, the School Education Officer will call to see you at **(Date & Time of Visit)** to discuss this matter further. This visit will provide the opportunity to talk through any difficulties or problems you may be experiencing which are affecting **(Child's Full Name)** school attendance.

If **(Child's Full Name)** continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure **(Child's Full Name)** regular attendance at school and therefore make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E King
Headteacher

Punctuality letter

Dear

It has been brought to my attention that the punctuality ofat St Joseph's School is causing concern.

I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance on time for each session that the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since the school year began in September to date, out of a possible **xxx** school weeks. **(Child's Full Name)** has arrived late on **xxx** occasions. You will appreciate this is an unsatisfactory situation as it causes to miss vital instructions or teaching time, therefore giving her/him a bad start to the school day.

School starts at 8.55am and late arrival is not only disruptive to **(Child's Name)** learning, but also to that of other pupils. I must point out that if **(Child's Name)** arrives after the closure of the register it will result in him/her being recorded as absent with a late mark, which will in turn affect his/her attendance percentage.

As a result if this situation continues it will be necessary to call a Punctuality Case Conference to discuss this matter, the date of which you will be notified in due course.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure **(Child's Full Name)** regular and punctual arrival at school thereby allowing him/her to gain the maximum benefit from a full day at school and making the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E King
Headteacher