



St Joseph and St Gregory's Catholic School Attendance Policy

Reviewed by: Gemma Otter

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Approved by: LAC

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Next Review:

Date: March 2024

Philosophy

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school. Regular attendance is important if pupils are to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School. Regular attendance is an important aspect of achievement, and prospective employers will look at attendance as part of their selection process.

Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can result in pupils placing themselves at risk. The school will address the issue of high levels of absenteeism and lateness, being sensitive to the individual circumstances relating to poor attendance, with the possibility of such pupils and their families receiving appropriate support.

Good attendance is an integral part of the school ethos, with pupils being rewarded for regular and improved attendance and good punctuality. Good attendance can be achieved through the forging of meaningful relationships between school, home and support agencies, and by offering a curriculum that stimulates every pupil.

It is very important that every pupil attends school regularly. This Policy sets out how St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School will work with parents/carers and pupils to achieve this.

The school day begins at **8.45am** and registration closes at **8.55am**. Classroom doors are open from **8.30am** and children are encouraged to arrive at this time to complete early morning work. Arriving to school after 8.55am is deemed as 'late' and you will need to sign your child in at the school office.

Aims:

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- ❖ Promoting good attendance and punctuality, making it a priority for students, parents/ carers, school staff and governors.
- ❖ Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ❖ Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ❖ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ❖ Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

- ❖ To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies and services.
- ❖ To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Legislation and guidance

St Joseph and St Gregory's Catholic school is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

The Education Act 1996 and Working together to improve school attendance 2022 states that:

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101221/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-2022.pdf)

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age

- (a) when they reach the age of five, if they reach that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their reaching that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

Roles and Responsibilities

Local Academy Committee (Governors) will:

- ❖ Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- ❖ Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- ❖ Regularly review and challenge attendance data and identify any specific trends.
- ❖ Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ❖ Implementation of this policy across the school
- ❖ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- ❖ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- ❖ Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- ❖ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The School Attendance Lead and team will:

- ❖ Ensure a high profile with regards to attendance and punctuality
- ❖ Contact a parent/carer who has not informed the school of the non-attendance, requesting reasons for absence.
- ❖ Make reasonable enquiries for all absences including home visits, contacting other schools, relatives and any other known sources of possible contact.
- ❖ Request medical evidence if deemed necessary.
- ❖ Encourage parents to bring their child/ren to school with minor ailments such as blocked noses and colds.
- ❖ Conduct unannounced late patrols.
- ❖ Contact parents/carers by telephone and in writing when a pupil is persistently late.
- ❖ Provide reports for the Senior Leadership Team indicating those pupils with attendance concerns, which include any reasons given for the absence.
- ❖ Arrange and implement Attendance Action Plans either at school or by home visit if this is more accessible for parents/carers.
- ❖ Oversee and monitor all attendance matters within the school.
- ❖ Produce certificates and rewards as necessary.
- ❖ Encourage parents to access MCAS and view their child/ren's school attendance regularly.
- ❖ Work jointly with school staff to identify pupils who have improved their attendance/punctuality and notify parents of this achievement.
- ❖ Identify and monitor pupils who are persistently late/absent and ensure parents/carers are contacted, creating support plans if required.
- ❖ Provide support to all pupils and families to implement ways to improve school attendance.
- ❖ Ensure up to date information is available on vulnerable students:
Children Looked After, Children in Need, children on the Child Protection Register, Young Carers, Young Offenders, children with English as an additional language, children with SEND, children from Ukraine or other war-torn countries and children eligible for Pupil Premium Funding

The Class Teacher will:

- ❖ Record attendance accurately
- ❖ Promote the attendance ethic within the class.
- ❖ Provide pastoral support when identified in liaison with school staff.
- ❖ Monitor attendance and liaise with the Attendance Team and/or Leadership Team with a clear vision of improvement.
- ❖ Advertise reward systems within the learning environment.
- ❖ Contact parents directly when punctuality and attendance concerns are forming.

Parental Responsibility:

- ❖ Make sure that your child attends every day and on-time.
- ❖ Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for your child.
- ❖ Ensure that, where possible, appointments for your child are made outside of the school day.

If your child is going to be absent you must:

- ❖ Contact the school by telephone, by 9.30am every day your child is absent or visit the school office by 9.30am every day your child is absent to report reasons for absence. (Email communication will not be accepted)
- ❖ Be aware the school may request medical evidence at any time.

If your child is going to be late you must:

- ❖ Provide an explanation and evidence for the lateness to a member of the office staff.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/carers), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register closes
- Shopping
- Looking after other children/dependants
- Day trips which have not been agreed
- Birthdays
- Holidays in term-time
- Accompanying family members to appointments

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 8% or more schooling across the school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects; we need parents'/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher receiving vital information and news for the day. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the pupil and can also encourage absence. The school day begins at **8.45am** and registration closes at **8.55am**. Classroom doors are open from **8.30am** and children are encouraged to arrive at this time to complete early morning work. Arriving to school after **8.55am** is deemed as 'late' and you will need to sign your child in at the school office. If your child arrives to school after **9.15am**, this will be recorded as **unauthorised** absence.

In some cases when the school, parents and external agencies are working together in early-stage casework, this could be under consultation to improve punctuality to school.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised, to be absent for.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in all cases, parents should apply in writing for leave of absence at least **4 weeks** in advance.. Whilst this policy is enforced, every request is also looked at on an individual basis, taking into account the following:

- Your child's previous attendance history
- Your child's stage of education and ability to catch up on missed schooling
- The time of year (SATs or exams)
- The nature of the request (e.g., exceptional circumstances)

In addition to this, the law states that “as of 1st September 2013 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.” If you choose to take your child out of school during term time you must accept that it will be unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be incurred.

The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Leadership Team. Parents/carers may be asked to supply documents to support the absence request and failing to provide evidence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Prolonged absences / Children Missing in Education

Prolonged absences have a significant impact on a pupil’s educational prospects and raise potential safeguarding concerns. St Joseph’s and St Gregory’s Catholic Primary School with the Education Welfare Service, uses their guidance and follows local authority policies and processes for reporting Children Missing in Education. Safeguarding concerns related to attendance can be explored using Early Help Assessments or referred to the Bedford Borough Integrated Front Door.

Further information and resources:

Education Welfare Service:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/education-welfare-service>

School attendance:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/172/download?inline>

Children Missing in Education Policy and Procedures:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/2835/download?inline>

Penalty Notices:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/174/download?inline>

A guide to prosecutions:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/173/download?inline>

Integrated Front Door:

<https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/kb5/bedford/directory/service.page?id=KhuF2dS2z58>