

Learning to love, loving to learn.



## ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### **Mission Statement**

St Joseph's vision is that together we are the architects of the future, building lives on the firm foundations of the gospel.

Inspired by Christian values we aim to provide love and security within a curriculum designed to meet the complex needs of all individuals, in order to prepare them to take their place in the ever changing world of today and tomorrow.

There is a statutory requirement for schools to maintain attendance registers showing the attendance of pupils at each session when the school is open to pupils, and to show a distinction between 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absence.

The aim of this policy is to give clear guidance to parents.

**Wandsworth Local Education Authority** supports schools and parents in the area of attendance by means of the Educational Welfare Service. The LEA also has a role in setting and supporting schools to achieve improved attendance targets.

### **Roles and responsibilities within school**

The school endeavours to maintain close, effective and positive links with parents. At the beginning of the school year, or at the admission of a new pupil the head teacher informs parents / carers of the school expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. Further reminders are included in the school newsletters.

**Class teachers are responsible** for marking the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. All teachers monitor attendance and encourage good attendance as part of their role. Teachers are responsible for informing the headteacher of any concerns they have about the attendance of pupils in their class.

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**The Headteacher is responsible** for the day to day management of the attendance policy and for ensuring that good liaison exists between the school, parents and other agencies.

**Administrative staff are responsible** for marking pupils who are late in the class register. Children who arrive after registers close will be marked as late in the register. If parents have informed the school of the reason for this lateness and it has been authorised, the lateness will be marked as an authorised absence "L". If this has not happened, then the lateness will be marked as an unauthorised absence "U". Administrative staff will use their discretion as to which, if any, parents should be contacted about a pupil's non-arrival at school, and will consult with the headteacher if necessary. Regular, persistent lateness will be followed up by the school in the same way as absence. When a pupil arrives late, their presence will be marked in the register. It will be included as unauthorised if the lateness is more than 30 minutes from the start of the session and it has not been authorised.

**Governors' are responsible** for providing support and encouragement for the good attendance of pupils.

**Parents are responsible for** informing the school early in the day if a child is to be absent due to illness or late due to a medical appointment. On return to school a letter should be provided stating the reason for the absence.

All families are encouraged to avoid taking children out of school during term time. Where parents do wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time an application needs to be completed (Appendix 1 ). **Please note Headteachers may not grant any time off during Term time, except exceptional circumstances. Holidays will always be unauthorised and may impose a Penalty Notice.** Only exceptional family emergencies will be authorised and evidence will be required. Absence **will not** be authorised for shopping, family days out, birthdays etc..

In particular cases where a pupil's absence from school is a cause for concern, or where there has been a pattern of absence, the school will make contact with parents on the first day of absence.

When parents do inform the school of their child's absence the school may authorise absence, but the fact that a parent supplies a reason does not automatically authorise the child's absence. In some cases the school will request medical certificates etc.

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Please note **school starts promptly at 9.00am** and children should be in the playground at **8.55am** lining up ready to go into class. Furthermore children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day – Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 at **3.15pm** and Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 at **3.30pm**. The same applies for After School Clubs – children must be collected promptly at the end of the after school club session.

### **Referral to Educational Welfare Service**

In order to improve school attendance, poor attenders will be identified and monitored. If your child is identified you will receive a letter advising you about improving attendance. If there are any more unauthorised absences you will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons for absence and agree an action plan to try to resolve any problems and to raise the level of attendance. Further unauthorised absence may result in the Local Education Authority taking legal action.

The legal action includes:

Issuing Penalty Notices: Parent receives a Notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The notice imposes a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid after 28 but before 42 days.

Prosecuting parents for unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 s.444 (1) – magistrates can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, add costs and impose Parenting Orders.

Prosecuting parents for persistent unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 s.444 (1A) – magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months

The Educational Welfare Service operates on behalf of the LEA to ensure that those sections of the Education Act 1996 which relate to children receiving efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise, are applied in line with Wandsworth's LEA's values, policies and procedures, and Equal Opportunity policies.

The headteacher and school admin officer is in regular contact with the Educational Welfare Officer, and will keep her informed of any concerns. The EWO monitors school registers and follows up any concerns by communicating with parents, seeing pupils in school, arranging a home visit or assisting with referrals to other professionals / agencies.

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The Educational Welfare Service has the authority to issue Penalty Notices to parents whose children have sufficient levels of unauthorised attendance. This process can be initiated by the school where there is a concern. Penalty Notices are paid directly to the Borough and do not profit the school.

If parent's require further advise about penalty notices or any issues relating to school attendance thy should contact the:

Education Welfare Service  
The Town Hall  
Wandsworth High Street  
SW18 2PU

**POLICY REVIEW TERM:** BIENNIAL

**Policy Reviewed:** June 2016

**Next Review:** June 2018



## APPENDIX 1

### APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances; otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

**No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.** The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other i.e. on an occasion such as a bereavement

**Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.**

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

When completing this application, please also refer to the School's Attendance Policy – Information for Parents.



**APPENDIX 1**

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES  
DURING TERM TIME**

Name of pupil(s):

Class(es):

Address:

Telephone No:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From.....To.....Total school days.....

**Exceptional circumstances request:**

*(this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)*

Signature of parent/carer.....Date.....

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**For school use only**

Seen by Headteacher (signature).....Date.....

Decision reached.....

Date reply returned.....