

St. Joseph's RC Primary School

Attendance Policy

Updated February 2025, Reviewed
March 2025 by Effectiveness.

Next review Spring 2026

"I came so that
you may have life,
and have it to
the full."

- John 10:10



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Attendance Policy

Rationale

At St Joseph's we believe that our students will gain the greatest benefit from their education if they attend school regularly and punctually. In order to secure regular attendance, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible. We will endeavour to work alongside parents, the local community and the Attendance Officer.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law (ref Section 7, 1996 Education Act).

Expectations

St Joseph's RC Primary has an attendance target of 96%. We aim to maintain a pattern of monitoring attendance and punctuality that ensures consistency throughout our school by promoting the following strategies:

- Attendance is a whole school culture.
- Maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Keeping accurate records.
- Involving all staff by providing clear guidelines for staff on the registration process, accurate use of codes and follow up due to absence.
- Informing parents/carers of their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring clear information is regularly communicated to parents/carers in a variety of ways.
- Raising awareness by weekly publication of figures in a weekly newsletter.
- Raising awareness of attendance issues to individual parents when their child's attendance becomes a cause for concern.
- Build strong supportive relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Support for pupils with medical conditions.
- Registers of all pupils are completed electronically by the class teacher or teaching assistant at 9.05am and 1.05pm
- Children who are absent or late will be noted.

Punctuality

Morning Routine

8.45am The school gates open. Parents/carers and students are encouraged to arrive at school by which time members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are available for parents to speak to if required.

All children can go straight to their classroom, where their teacher will be.

9.00am The school gates are closed. All students arriving late after 9.00am must report to the School Office accompanied by the adult that brought them to school. Students will be registered with their name, class, time of arrival and reason for being late. Students will then order their dinner (if they are having school meals) and be given a card to take to class to inform the teacher that they have been registered at the office.

9.05am The register will be taken promptly and the school day will begin. Any student arriving after 9.05am will be recorded in the official register as late (L code).

9.15am Registration closes. Students arriving after this time will be recorded in the official register as late after the register has closed (U code). A U code is an unauthorised absence.

We encourage punctuality by:

- Having consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, punctuality.
- Punctuality awards granted to the class/classes with the lowest number of lates at the weekly celebration assembly with a special award for 0 lates.
- The number of lates per class and the number of minutes of missed learning lost in each class due to being late is included in a weekly newsflash on the school app.
- Weekly Punctuality Data for each class is displayed in the main school entrance.

We respond to poor punctuality in the following ways:

- Parents/Carers of students who are showing a concerning number of lates will be contacted by the Attendance Lead who will inform parents/carers that if a child receives 10 U codes within a 10 week period, then a Penalty Notice fine may be issued by Salford City Council. If there is no improvement in punctuality a meeting may also be arranged between the parent/carer, the Attendance Lead and the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

- Wherever possible we will assist parents in enabling their child to arrive at school on time by offering support e.g. helping to parents to build morning routines, breakfast club.
- Late registration is managed by the Attendance Lead and as such is monitored daily so that patterns can be quickly spotted.
- If we do not see any improvement in punctuality we use legal interventions to help us change the poor punctuality by requesting Fixed Penalty Fines or fast track to prosecution.

Attendance

We encourage attendance by:

- Having consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance.
- Termly attendance letters including registration reports are sent home to all parents.
- We reward good attendance by granting an attendance award to the class with the highest attendance during the weekly celebration assembly, classes with 100% attendance will receive a special award.
- Rewarding students who have achieved 96%+ attendance at the end of each term.
- Rewarding students with improved attendance.
- Attendance Data for each class is displayed weekly in the main school entrance and in the school newsletter published every Friday.

We respond to non-attendance in the following ways:

- The Attendance Lead will monitor any attendance that falls under the school target of 96%. Letters will be issued to parents and early interventions may be put in place to ensure that attendance does not deteriorate further.
- Contacting parents and emergency contacts of children who are absent and no reason has been received:
 - Day One - Phone call, app message and email.
 - Day Two - Phone call, app message and email, home visit, Safeguarding Lead is informed.

- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging the parent/carer will be contacted by the Attendance Lead to help resolve the difficulties.
- If attendance drops below 90% then parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Panel with the Attendance Lead and the Local Authority Attendance Officer.
- If we do not see any improvement in attendance we use legal interventions to help us change the poor attendance by requesting Fixed Penalty Fines or fast track to prosecution.

Absences

There are many reasons a student may be absent from school and some of those are reasonable and may be authorised by the Headteacher. It is essential that school is notified of any absence.

Absences from school come under the following categories:

- Authorised
 - Medical appointment
 - Other circumstances
 - Illness
- Unauthorised
 - Holiday
 - Late arrival after 9.15am
 - No reasonable reason for absence

If a student will be absent from school for any reason the school must be informed before the morning register is taken at 9.05am. Parent/Carers must phone school and leave a message with a member of the office staff or on the answer machine, or contact through the absence reporting form on the app. The message must include the name of the student, the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school. If dropping off a sibling parents can inform a member of staff at the office in person.

If a student returns to school following an absence without a reason, an unexplained absence letter will be sent home for parents/carers to fill in. If after a week there is still no reasonable reason for the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. 10 or more unauthorised absences (sessions) may incur a fixed penalty notice. Please note 1 day am and pm equals 2 sessions.

Medical Appointment

Every effort should be made to ensure appointments are made out of school time. However, if this is not possible then the school office should be notified beforehand in person or via the medical appointment notification form on the app or by phone. In order for school to authorise this as a medical appointment, you will be asked to provide evidence of this, i.e. an appointment card, appointment confirmation text/message, prescription or hospital letter. Failure to provide proof of appointments will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Siblings attending an appointment not intended for them will not have their absence authorised. Alternative arrangements must be put in place to ensure a sibling's attendance e.g. Breakfast Club, other family member to drop off/pick up etc.

Illness

Everybody is unwell from time to time, absences due to illness for a reasonable time will be authorised. 10 sessions or more of continuous absence must be supported by medical evidence, otherwise the absence will be unauthorised and parents/carers may incur a penalty notice.

If your child has had 10 sessions (five days) of *authorised* illness during a school year, school will require medical evidence in order to authorise any further absences due to illness. This may be an appointment card, appointment confirmation text/message, prescription or hospital letter.

Absence due to Other Circumstances

Absences may be authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers must complete an exceptional circumstances request via the school app or on a paper form from the office. You will receive a written response.

Holidays in Term time

Holidays in term time **will not** be authorised, if you remove your child from school for the purposes of a holiday you may receive a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance

The guidance for the R code states that only dates set aside exclusively for religious observance by that particular religion can be R coded,

The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)

If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent

applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C

No reasonable reason for absence

If the school does not receive an appropriate reason for a student's absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. If a pattern of this type of absence emerges then parents/carers may be invited to a meeting. 10 sessions (five days) or more of this type of absence may result in a penalty notice.

Attendance policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed in line with Government Guidelines, the rational, the schools vision and values, safeguarding policy and equalities scheme.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) Regulations 2024

2024 No. 210

Education Penalty Notices for Non-School attendance

New Legislation comes into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the issuing of penalty notices relating to non-school attendance.

Schools are required to consider, on a case by case basis, whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when their child's absence is unauthorised.

Working within a Code of Conduct, Salford Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (O coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised holidays (G Coded)
- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration (U coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences (O, G and U coded)

You may receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance.

Within the new National Framework, there is a national limit to the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any parent in respect of an individual child, within a three-year period. Each fixed penalty is issued on the basis of per parent/per child – therefore where a child has two parents, two fines may be issued.

The fixed penalty notice amount has increased to the following:

- Penalty Notice One - £160 discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Penalty Notice Two - £160 with no discount offered.

Should a third absence be taken within the three-year period, a parent may be summonsed to the Magistrates Court for knowingly failing to secure good attendance at school (Section 444 (1A) of Education Act 1996).

Please note that from 19th August 2024, schools are not able to authorise any leave of absence for holidays.

The local authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.