



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Attendance Policy

Aims

To provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance. This will ensure that all stakeholders understand the school's expectations of themselves, and each other, and strive to attain them.

Objectives

1. to achieve a 96% + attendance rate
2. to restrict days taken as holiday, during term time in any one year.
3. to promote partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
4. to involve other agencies when all possible school based supportive measures have been put in place.

The policy will give clear guidance on expectations and procedures for the following personnel:

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors

Procedures for implementation

Expectations of pupils

- that they will attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 96 – 100%
- that they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- that they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Expectations of parents

- That they will ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 96 – 100% attendance rate
- That they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (e.g. by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend
- That any absence is followed by a written explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day
- To ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day
- To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- To refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

Expectations of school

- To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence
- To make early contact with parents when a child fails to attend
- To refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance
- To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

Expectations of Academy Committee members

- To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Head teacher reports
- To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modeling
- To communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate
- To nominate members for the attendance panel
- To attend celebration assemblies for good attendance

School Procedures related to attendance

Registration

- registration periods are 8.50am-9.00 am / 1.00 – 1.10pm
- registers will be completed during these periods and returned to the office at the end of registration
- registers will be completed using the codes identified in Appendix A as dictated by Oxfordshire County Council.
- If no information, regarding the absence of a child, has been received by 9.00am, the office will telephone the parent to check the reason for absence
- If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Head teacher, following statutory requirements and the school's policy on attendance.

Authorised absence

- Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and each day that the child is absent from school. A note of confirmation on the child's return is also required.
- If the child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents. Parents must request the period of absence or inform the school in advance, preferably with a copy of any medical appointment documentation.
- If the absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures then this will be an authorised absence.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence

Absences will not be authorised if the following occur:

- Unexplained absence
- Absence for a shopping trip or looking after a younger child at home
- A trip or holiday that has not been approved by the school in advance
- Any absence that is not considered by the panel to be as the result of extenuating circumstances

Persistent lateness

If a child arrives after the register has closed at 8.50 am, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter can be referred to the Attendance & Engagement Team, who will offer support. If there is still no improvement, a Penalty Fine could be issued.

Leave of absence

There is no automatic right to leave being granted.

- Under no circumstances will leave be authorised if attendance is below 96%
- Requests for absence during term time will be reviewed by the Head teacher and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. Parents will be expected to attach a letter outlining these circumstances with the absence request form. Issues such as parents' employment conditions related to non-negotiable holiday dates, the time of year and level of previous attendance will be taken into consideration.

If the school refuses a leave of absence request, but the child is still taken on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will receive a letter confirming this. The matter can be referred to the Attendance & Engagement Team and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued without further warning. If a Penalty Notice is issued, it carries a fine of £60 for each child, per parent.

i.e. 3 children x £60 = £180 for each parent, so the total amount for a family with two parents and three children would be £360.

Response to non-attendance

- If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted by telephone.
- Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will mark the child's absence as unauthorised.
- Where there has been no response and an absence has persisted for 4 days and the child is not open to services, the Early Intervention Hub will be contacted and the absence reported as a safeguarding concern. If a child is open to services then any unexplained absence is referred to the child's social worker as a matter of urgency.
- Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Attendance & Engagement Team
- If a child's attendance slips below 95%, the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance & Engagement Team if appropriate.
- If a child is repeatedly late, the school will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance & Engagement Team if appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between school and parents, with the support of the Attendance & Engagement Team, the school will refer the matter formally to

the Attendance & Engagement Team service and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.

Legal proceedings

The Education Act 1996, Section 444 and the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23, gives powers to the Local Authority to initiate a range of legal procedures if parents/carers fail to ensure an appropriate education for their child/ren. These procedures include a Penalty Fine, an Education Supervision Order, Parenting Order or prosecution which could result in a fine, unpaid work in the community and in extreme cases a term of imprisonment.

Incentives for good attendance

- Attendance data will be checked termly (six times) by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to identify any issues
- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns
- A certificate for 96% attendance through to 100% attendance will be given out at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 with an additional certificate for the whole year at the end of term 6.
- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school will be raised in assemblies and PHSCE sessions
- Incentives are in place for whole school attendance.
- A Class cup is awarded weekly for high attendance achievement.
- Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance at Parent consultations in February and July.

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness

- The SLT will analyse attendance data at the end of each of the six terms to identify issues and trends
- The school will work closely with the Attendance & Engagement Team in their monitoring of the attendance and registration procedures in the school
- The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance % against their target at the end of the year, and their progress towards attaining the target in February.

Summary

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- a 96% + attendance rate
- a positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
- clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

Clare Smith: Headteacher
Mary Cronin: Chair of Academy Committee
Date of review: September 2021
Next review: September 2022