



# **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Approved: Autumn 2021  
To be reviewed: Autumn 2023

*Together, we learn, love and grow with Jesus*

## **ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

St. Jude's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a full and inclusive education for all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% for all children. Every Opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Wigan attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### **St Jude's School Procedure**

#### **Authorisation**

Any child who is absent from school during the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as "N" (No reason provided).

Should we receive no reason for absence attempts will be made to contact you by text or phone to request a reason. Should we receive no response then the absence will remain as unauthorised. Home visits may also be made by the head teacher, pastoral manager or attendance enforcement.

## **Lateness**

- a) Classroom doors open at 8.45am and children are expected to be in class for 8.55am for morning registration at 9.00am.
- b) Children arriving after 9am must register via the office and will be marked as an "L".
- c) Any child arriving after 9.15am will be classed as an unauthorised absence and marked as a "U" unless they have attended an emergency medical appointment or hospital appointment and the letter, text or appointment card have been seen.
- d) Persistent lateness will be dealt with in the same manner as persistent absence and may incur a penalty fine, attendance enforcement officer visits or court proceedings.
- e) The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm for all classes.

## **First Day Absence**

Parents are expected to contact school by telephone or in person, as soon as possible on the first day of absence; the information will be recorded and monitored by the Office. If the Headteacher considers the reason to be acceptable, the absence will be authorised and coded appropriately. The Office will oversee the recording decision in the register.

If a child is absent without explanation, you will receive a text and or call. Should we receive no response for consecutive days then you may receive a home visit, or as outlined in our safeguarding procedures a request will be made for a welfare check to be carried out by the police or social care.

## **Continued Absences**

If a child is absent for longer than expected, a telephone call will be made requesting an explanation. If we are unable to make contact then you may receive a home visit or a welfare check may be requested.

## **Medical Appointments**

Routine doctors, dental and optician appointments should be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible in order to authorise the absence, a copy of the appointment letter, card should be shown to the school office. Non routine medical appointments e.g-hospital appointments will require a copy of the letter to kept on file at school.

Advice may be sought from the school nursing services in respect of frequent illness impacting school attendance.

## **Onward referral to support services**

Any pupil who is absent without a satisfactory explanation for 3 or more days is a safeguarding concern therefore, the matter will be discussed with the Attendance Enforcement Officer, home visits may be carried out and

possible referral to the police for a welfare check. It may be deemed appropriate to refer to the Children Missing in Education Team. The school will give details to the appropriate service regarding the action that they have taken to locate a child's whereabouts including welfare checks.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Manager to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. When a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences or when attendance falls below 93% then their attendance will be monitored. The school and Local Authority Attendance Officer will monitor the attendance of all children who fall below 93%.

Absence falling below 93% will require medical evidence in the form of medicine prescribed by the doctor, appointment card (these are provided without charge) or text. Unless we receive medical evidence the absence will be unauthorised.

Red, Amber, Green letters will be sent at the end of each term, however, these can be sent more often if this is required.

**Green** - Good attendance over 97%

**Amber** - 96.9% to 93% attendance

**Red** - 92.9% or below attendance

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parent/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children have good attendance and punctuality at school e.g. via newsletters, information in the Home/School agreement.

Good attendance will also be encouraged as follows:

- Accurate consistent registration procedures and prompt follow up
- Awards for children who achieve over 98% attendance at the end of the term and academic year
- Reward /Certificate for significant improvement.
- Weekly, termly and yearly rewards
- Weekly recognition for best performing classes, leading to a class reward at the end of term.

### **Holidays in term time**

It is the school's intention to fully comply with government regulations. The Law states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school, for holidays, during term-time. Holidays during term-time therefore,

are unauthorised. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement (through regular newsletters and within the prospectus).

The government's guidance states that under **exceptional circumstances** the Headteacher **may** consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school for short periods.

In line with national and local guidance school will outline clearly, when **permission** will **not** be granted in any circumstances: -

- During transition time as a pupil is settling into the school/new class.
- Immediately before or during SATs.
- If the pupil has an attendance record below (95%)
- If the pupil's attendance rate will fall below (95%) if leave is taken.
- If the pupil already has unauthorised absences.
- Holidays

In line with other Wigan Schools, **exceptional circumstances** will have to be proven. A meeting must be made with the headteacher to discuss the nature of the exceptional circumstance and his decision will be final.

If the school denies a request for term-time leave, yet the child is taken out of school regardless, this will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and could result in a penalty fine, referral to the schools allocated local authority attendance enforcement officer. Penalty fines will be applied for if the absence meets the threshold.

- Failure of a pupil to return by the agreed date may, after a further 10 school days, may result in the pupil being removed from the school roll.

### **Persistent Absence**

Penalty fines will be issued for persistent unauthorised absence, following local authority thresholds.

- Home visits will be made by school and the attached attendance enforcement officer for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Meetings, action plans and targets will be set for pupils who are persistently absent. Failure to improve or comply will result in a request for further intervention from attendance enforcement which may lead to court proceedings.

### **Covid-19**

Guidance from the government changes rapidly, therefore any changes in respect of covid-19 will be communicated separately to this policy.

Unless otherwise advised, as of September 2021, attendance at school is mandatory and all children are expected to attend as normal. Procedures for dealing with poor school attendance have been re-instated by the school and local authority.

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you may know, government legislation with regards school attendance has recently changed. As I am sure you appreciate, regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance, not only disrupts children's education, it makes it harder to catch up on work missed, and it can also affect their social life within school.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if your children attend regularly.

This message is even more important due to the impact Covid-19 has had on children's education.

In recent years there have been increasing request for holidays in term time as parents and guardians mistakenly believe that pupils are automatically allowed 10 days holiday from school in any one year. The school **will not authorise** any applications of leave for holidays.

Please see the penalty notice on the final page that we are required to send out each term. It is also available on the school website.

**Additionally**

- All requests for **exceptional circumstances** leave in term time must be in writing on the Request for Term Time of Absence form available from the school office.
- Any granting of leave does not set a precedent for similar future requests and the frequency/duration of such leave periods will be considered as factors in future decisions.
- Requests will be considered by the Headteacher and an appointment may be made to discuss the request.
- Any approved leave must be subject to an agreement between parents and the school stating what leave has been granted and the pupil's date of return to school.
- All decisions made by the headteacher regarding leave are final.

Thank you for your continued support for our school.

Yours sincerely

D Wilson  
Headteacher

[Date]

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School attendance**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the 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.

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

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.

Yours sincerely

D Wilson  
Headteacher