



Attendance Guidance for Parents

St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy prides itself on encouraging excellent attendance for all of our pupils. We aspire to high standards of attendance and strive to build a culture where all pupils can, and want to be, in school and ready to learn. Our aim is for the attendance of all children to be **97% or above**.

Regular attendance is important in helping children to make good progress, maintain friendships, develop positive routines and make the most of the opportunities available to them at school. Every day of learning matters, and even small amounts of absence can begin to have an impact over time.

The Department for Education expects schools to monitor attendance closely and to work with families at an early stage where attendance may be becoming a concern. Our approach is supportive and focused on understanding and addressing any barriers to regular attendance. Therefore, the guidance below sets out the steps that will be taken should your child's attendance fall below 97%. This allows families to be aware of the systems and processes in place, the reasons for these and what support can be offered at different points to improve your child's attendance.

Attendance Expectations:

Attendance %	Academy days missed per year	Number of sessions missed per year	Attendance grading	Possible actions
100%	0	0	Outstanding	
98%	4	8	Very good	
96%	7	14	Good	School monitoring
95%	10	20	Almost there	School support
94%	11	22	Improvement needed	School support
90%	20	40	Concern	External support Referrals
85%	29	58	Serious concern	External support Referrals

Procedures for monitoring attendance:

We hope that the majority of steps below will never need to be taken, and our intention is always to avoid progression to the next step. Where your child's attendance is becoming a cause for concern, we ask that you please work with us to improve it at the earliest opportunity.

All communication from school regarding attendance is intended to be supportive and attendance will always be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you require support with improving your child's attendance at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Start of Year Letter – This will be issued by school if your child's attendance was 96% or below the previous year, unless there have been exceptional circumstances for this i.e. a prolonged or serious illness or significant family circumstances.

Initial letter of concern – This will be issued by school if your child's attendance drops **below 96%**. This letter is simply to make parents/carers aware that their child's attendance has dropped below 96% and that school are monitoring it.

Gentle concerns letter – If school continue to have concerns about your child's attendance, you may then be sent a 'Gentle Concerns' letter from the EWO and invited into school for a meeting with the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher (see below)

Meeting with the Headteacher – If a Gentle Concerns Letter is issued from the EWO, you will be invited into school for a meeting with either Mrs Paquin or Mrs Stewart. This is an opportunity for us to discuss barriers your child may be facing with regards to their attendance and identify support which can be put in place. At this meeting, an Attendance Contract will be created which all parties (school, parents and the child(ren)) will contribute and agree to. A monitoring period of approximately 3 weeks will be set and there will be a further meeting to assess whether the contract is having an impact and attendance is improving.

If attendance improves, the contract will remain in place for a further 3 weeks before being reviewed again. If there is continuing improvement, it is likely that the contract will end and school will continue monitoring attendance in line with usual school routines.

If attendance continues to decline, a discussion will be had about further support that the family or child may need and what steps may be taken if attendance does not improve. ***A 'Serious Concerns' letter will be issued from the EWO in conjunction with this.***

Warning of a Penalty Notice – This will be issued by the EWO if there has been no improvement in attendance/ little engagement from the family, and where school continues to have significant concerns about a child's attendance. This will signal the beginning of a 6-week monitoring period, during which we would expect no further unauthorised absences.

School would be seeking further discussions with parents and families at this point to discuss what we can do to help you avoid a Penalty Notice being issued, and any further support that you require from school in order to help your child's attendance improve.

If, in the 6-week monitoring period, there are further unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice will be issued by the EWO. The decision to pursue or withdraw the Penalty Notice lies purely with the EWO at this point and is no longer at the discretion of school.

Pre-court meeting – This is always a last resort and will only take place where there has been little or no improvement in attendance, following **all** of the steps above. A child's attendance

would need to be below 90%, usually with at least 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 weeks, for a meeting to be convened.

The meeting is chaired by the school's allocated EWO and after the meeting, an 8-week review period is given. If attendance improves during this 8-week period, no further action will be taken, however the warning will stay in place for 12 months. If no improvement is seen during the 8-week review, then the EWO will move to prosecution.

Holidays during term-time

Following advice from the Local Authority and our Educational Welfare Officer, from September 2026 we will be issuing Penalty Notices for holidays which are for 10 sessions (5 days) or more in a 10-week period.

Parents should be aware that these **do not** have to be consecutive days i.e. if a child was on holiday for 3 days and then went on a further 2 day holiday within the 10 week period, a Penalty Notice would be issued.

If parents wish to take their child(ren) on holiday during term-time, an Absence Request form must be completed prior to the holiday being taken. While each request will be considered on an individual basis, leave of absences during term-time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If the leave of absence is authorised, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher how much of the absence is authorised.

If school have reason to believe that a child is on a holiday which would fit the criteria for a Penalty Notice but parents have not notified us, we may still request that the EWO issues a Penalty Notice.

Holidays during term-time which last for longer than 15 days are classed as 'Extended Leave' and would be targeted for prosecution, rather than a Penalty Notice, unless the leave was authorised by the Headteacher. This would only happen in exceptional circumstances.

Additional information for parents

Lates after registration closes

If your child arrives at school after 9.15am, then they are classed as being 'Late after registration has closed'. They will be given a 'U' code on the register; this is classified as an unauthorised absence and will affect your child's attendance percentage. If your child is persistently late after registration has closed, all of the steps above will be taken, even if they are in school every day. This is because school not only have a duty to promote good attendance, but also be alert for and actively discourage patterns of late arrival.

This **does not** apply if a child has attended a medical or dental appointment, where proof of the appointment has been given to the school office.

Parent's Evening

Parents will be given an updated copy of their child's attendance record at each Parent's Evening. This is an opportunity for you to discuss your child's attendance with their class teacher and for school to offer any support you may need if your child's attendance is below 96%.

Safeguarding Procedures

As Attendance falls under the umbrella of Safeguarding, there are additional procedures put in place when children are absent from school, even when school have been informed of the reason for absence.

Home visits will be undertaken on the **first day** of absence for children whose attendance percentage is below 90%, regardless of whether a Dojo has been sent or a phone call made.

Additional home visits may be undertaken, regardless of a child's overall attendance percentage, where the school has not received notification of an absence or is unable to establish the reason for the child's absence. Home visits may also be undertaken where the school has concerns about a child's welfare, safety or attendance, or where it is considered appropriate and in the best interests of the child. Such visits form part of the school's approach to ensuring that children are safe, supported and able to access their education, and to understanding and addressing any barriers to attendance.

Attendance is led in school by Mrs Paquin and Miss Sutcliffe. We also work closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Local Authority. We regularly monitor attendance data for the whole school to identify falling attendance as soon as possible, so that all parties can work together to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity. We appreciate that the vast majority of children in our school have excellent attendance and thank you for your continued support in ensuring that your child benefits fully from their education.