



St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

"Believe, Achieve, Succeed"

Under Saint Joseph's guardianship and protection, we will be supported to achieve and succeed in the things the Lord wants us to do.



**Part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic
Academy Trust**

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: September 2023

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The school has a major role in monitoring levels of attendance and punctuality and in creating the appropriate climate in the school to foster regular attendance and excellent timekeeping all of which the school believes promotes a basis for each child to achieve their potential. We take our responsibilities seriously and carefully record all absences and lateness.

- Promote excellent attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absences.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full – time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Promote punctuality.
- Support families who encounter any difficulties relating to attendance.

2. Parent/Carer Responsibility

Parents/Carers are asked to notify the school on the first day of any absence by **08:50am** with details of why your child will be absent that day. Contact can be made either by telephone (**01858 465359**), leaving a message on the absence answering machine, or by email to **office@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk**.

If the school has not been notified of an absence, the school office will telephone the Parent/Carers to establish reason for absence and that a child is safe, with a responsible adult.

Failure to response to attempted contact from the school office will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

Regulations state that if the school is not informed by parents of medical appointments, illness, holidays etc. then these absences automatically become **unauthorised**. It is therefore essential that any reasons for absence (even short absences) are given.

The school keeps records of all authorised and unauthorised absences. This is to allow the Headteacher and all members of staff to monitor attendance closely and any identify any irregular attendances or children who are away from school for more than 5 consecutive days.

3. Monitoring Attendance

The Headteacher, after further consultation with the school attendance officer, will contact the parents/carers of the child/children concerned to request an informal meeting to see how the school can support the parents/carers in improving attendance. The school is very aware that issues of attendance are sometimes due to factors beyond the control of parents or carers, such as long-term illness or hospitalisation. The school is committed to working with parents to limiting the impact of these events on the development of individual children. However, where attendance is due to factors within the control of parents or carers, the school will seek to establish an agreed plan of action to improve patterns of attendance. Actions will be agreed with parents / carers and the Headteacher at this meeting and recorded. Further monitoring of the child's attendance will then be carried out on a daily and weekly basis.

4. Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Intervention

The school has commissioned Children's Attendance Welfare Services Ltd (CAWS), and where it is deemed appropriate, the school will submit a referral to their Educational Welfare officer (EWO). At all times, the school and the EWO will seek to work together with parents/cares to respond to the issues identified in the referral. In certain circumstances, other agencies such as the school Doctor / Nurse may be called on to support the process. The school is committed to ensuring that parents and carers are fully involved and informed about every stage of these processes.

This approach has been very successful in helping the school and parents/carers to work together to ensure that the welfare and development of all children in our care is supported.

5. Punctuality and Collection

Parents/Carers are requested to ensure their child(ren) arrive on time for school at **8:40am** for lessons starting at **8:50am**. Children arriving late should enter the school via the front entrance. The school office will record the time your child arrives, and any reason given for lateness. This ensures an accurate record is kept in case of fire or other emergencies on the premises.

On the occasions when the school has been informed in advance of late arrival due to a doctor, dentist, or hospital appointment, for example, the reason is recorded by the school office. Documents such as an appointment letter, text or email will be requested by the school to confirm your child's appointment.

The data of all recorded lateness is collated and highlighted to the Headteacher on a weekly basis. Persistent late coming will result in parents/carer being invited to discuss the reasons with the Headteacher and, any further late coming may involve a referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

We ask all parent and Carers to arrive promptly to collect your child at the end of the school day. Unless a year 6 child has obtained signed permission (parents / carers and Headteacher) to walk home alone. In special circumstances and after discussion with the parents / carers and Headteacher, this permission may be extended to year 5 pupils.

The collection times are as follows:

Foundation Stage – 03:10pm

Year 1 – 03:10pm

Year 2 – 03:10pm

Year 3 – 03:15pm

Year 4 – 03:15pm

Year 5 – 03:15pm

Year 6 – 03:15pm

If your child has not been collected at this time, the school office will promptly make a telephone call to parents/carers to determine if there is a problem or, how quickly the child can be collected.

6. Family Holidays and Leave of Absence Request

The school does not permit the taking of holidays in school time.

Any family holidays taken during term time could result in a penalty notice being issued from the Local Authority of £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and £120 if paid within 28 days. Please be aware the school can only authorise holiday for 'exceptional circumstances' even if your child's attendance is otherwise good.

Parent/Carers seeking permission to take a child out of school are requested to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form which is available from the school office. Once completed, the form should include all relevant information regarding the proposed absence and evidential documentation to support the request before returning it to the school office. The Headteacher will consider each case considering the individual circumstances and decide whether the reason given is 'exceptional' or a religious observance.

7. Legislation and Legal Sanctions

The following changes came into force in Autumn Term 2013.

From 1st September 2013, the reference in law to Headteachers being able (at their discretion) to agree up to 10 days of leave of absence was removed. Instead, the legal reference will be amended and will mean that **schools should not authorise leave of absence unless:** The Headteacher considers that there are 'exceptional circumstances' relating to the applicant AND an application (leave of absence request) has been made in advance by the parent.

It is a requirement in "The Educational School Attendance Targets (England) Regulations" that "the Governing Body shall set an (attendance) target and submit it to the local education authority." The school's current target for pupil attendance is 100%, which reflects the importance that the school and parents attach to regular attendance.

The penalty notice detailed above in section 6 will be applied to all parents/carers of children of compulsory school age and can be applied if:

- Several unauthorised absences occur.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holiday taken without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public during school hours without a justified reason.

8. Links with other policies

This Policy is linked to:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2023.

Caws Working Policy for Schools 2023.

9. Guidance

This policy meets Government Guidance on School attendance and Absence.

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-attendance-and-absence)

This policy also meets the requirements of Working together to Improve school Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's Statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

[School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-behaviour-and-attendance-parental-responsibility-measures)

[The Education \(School Attendance Targets\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/2494/contents/part-1)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/child-ill-for-school/)

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request Form



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Coventry Road,
Market Harborough
Leicestershire, LE16 9BZ
Tel: 01858 465 359
office@stjosephs.leics.sch.uk
www.stjosephs.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs B Dabbs

Leave of Absence Request Form

The school and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non-attendance (however short or infrequent) is treated seriously.

Government guidelines, prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, **unless there are exceptional circumstances** or as a religious observance. A family holiday during term-time does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances.' Therefore, leave of absence will not be granted for any family holiday requests.

You should also note that if your child has unauthorised leave of absence, you may either be issued with a penalty notice, or your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.

It is hoped that you will carefully consider the information outlined above before making this request.

I / we request that Mrs Dabbs considers leave of absence for:

Child's name: Class:

From: to

Reason for request:

.....
.....

Signed:(parent/carer) Date:.....

Return to parents:

If your child has unauthorised leave of absence, you may be issued with a **Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child** (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.

Child's Name..... Class.....

Period of absence from.....to.....has/has not been agreed.

It will be marked on the child's school record as an Authorised/Unauthorised Absence.

Signed..... Headteacher Date:.....

