

Tyfu mewn Cariad

YSGOL SANT JOSEFF



BAE COLWYN

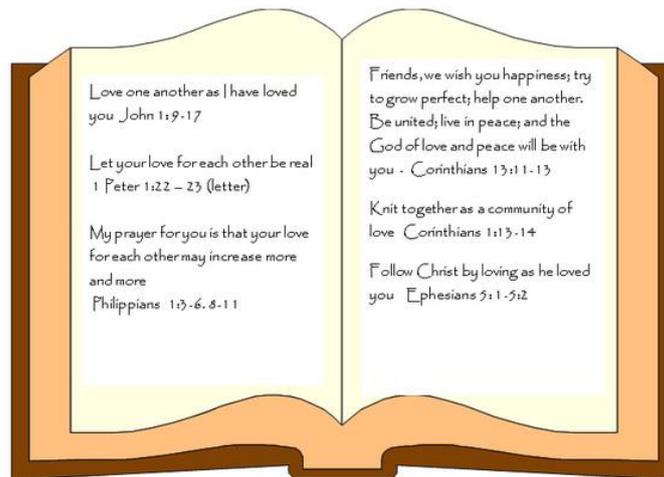
Grow in Love

# 30. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Valid until Spring 2026

Policy owned by Headteacher

Grow in Love



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement

For and on behalf of the

Board of Governors

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Headteacher

.....

Date:

## INTRODUCTION

This policy details the rights, responsibilities and rules relating to the attendance of pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary school.

The School will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all pupils. **During the Covid pandemic, school will follow Welsh Government and Conwy Education Services guidance in making adjustments to the policy below as necessary.**

### 1. PRINCIPLES

The school will:

- Ensure that staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive suitable in-service training on registration regulations and educational law.
- Address with parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on **the first day of absence**.
- Share attendance rates with parents and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils
- Consult with pupils on their individual attendance and attendance targets
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and school governors.
- Send information each term to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Ensure that the attendance policy and practices are monitored regularly and its impact measured using All Wales Core Data/School Effectiveness Framework

### 2. PROCEDURES

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil the School will:

- Contact the parents by telephone on the first morning of absence
- After **three days** of unexplained absence, send a letter home
- Invite parents into school to assess the problem and develop an action plan e.g. curriculum modification, ALN investigations, bullying issues, referral to other agencies or professionals
- After **ten days** of unexplained absence, refer to the school's Education Social Work Service, using the prescribed referral form
- Adopt an individual pupil re-integration plan where a pupil is returning to school after any absence of longer than two weeks.

### 3. PRACTICE

The School will

- Keep and maintain registers accurately and the systems for recording pupil presence.
- Ensure the use of correct registration codes

- Maintain a consistent approach to marking registers and the operating systems for recording pupil presence
  - Registers open at 8.55am and remain open until 9.25am
  - Pupils arriving after the register is called and prior to 9.25am will be recorded as late (L)
  - Pupils arriving after the close of registers will be marked as a 'U code' which is recorded as an unauthorised absence
- Maintain a named Governor for attendance – Chair of Governors
- Regularly analyse attendance data to inform reasons for absence, profile persistent absence, identify vulnerable groups and links to standards
- Ensure all staff know, understand and consistently apply the policy across school
- Ensure effective tracking is in place to identify any pupil whose attendance begins to slip
- Implement Children Missing Education procedures i.e. school checklist, referral to ESW Service which can help limit absences on pupil records
- Ensure prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance.
- Liaise closely with the school's Education Social Worker/Education Welfare Officer
- Record carefully all telephone messages from parents and carers.

#### **4. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **School**

- The school expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive on time in a condition fit to learn.
- The school staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will investigate all absenteeism and lateness promptly.
- The school will liaise with parents/carers if their child's attendance/punctuality causes concern.
- The school will comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 in taking an attendance register twice a day at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session
- The school adheres to Child Employment & Performance Licensing so that absences are appropriately and legally agreed and documented
- The school will use the correct registration codes in a consistent manner and train staff accordingly

##### **Pupils**

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils will be listened to and respected.
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

##### **Parents**

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends the School regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

- Parents are responsible for informing the school by letter, telephone, or a personal visit of the reason for any absence on the first morning of that absence.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time, unless it is regarded by the Head Teacher as exceptional circumstances
- Contact the school promptly if they have any concerns that their child is reluctant to attend school

## 5. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are registered as a pupil.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, states that:-

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (S.7.,Pt.I Ch.I).*

Section 444 further states that:

*"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence." (S.444, Pt. VI Ch. II).*

Also under Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) fixed penalty notices have been introduced as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444. Parents/carers may discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence under Section 444 by paying a penalty. Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued in relation to unauthorised absences (see Conwy Education Services Code of Conduct)

An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:-

- The pupil was absent with leave (authorised absence).
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil/parents belong.
- A limited defence is available to the parents of travelling children.

The act also places a legal obligation on:

- The LA to secure that efficient education is available to meet the needs of its population (S.13, Ptl, Ch.III), and to enforce attendance (S.437, Pt.VI, Ch.II)..
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA of a child's absence from school. (Inclusion & Pupil Support – Welsh Government Circular 47/2006)

## 6. ABSENCE

### Types of absence

Absence will be authorised by the school if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness;
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments;
- Days of religious observance;
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement;

Absence from school will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Shopping;
- Haircuts;
- Missed bus;
- Slept late;
- No uniform;
- Looking after brothers and sisters;
- Minding the house

## **7. AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absences.

**AN EXPLANATION IS REQUIRED FOR EVERY ABSENCE. IF ONE IS NOT FORTHCOMING THE ABSENCE WILL BE TREATED AS UNAUTHORISED.**

If the school has concerns relating to the explanation given by parents, the absence will be further investigated and left unauthorised until the matter has been clarified to the satisfaction of the school.

Where there are concerns regarding parental explanation for absence, the school will work with the ESW service. Where necessary, parents may be asked to produce medical evidence to support pupil absences.

## **8. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:**

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes ALL unexplained absences.

The governing body have agreed that they will request that the LA issue fixed penalty notices in appropriate cases, following consultation with the ESW service.

## **9. FAMILY HOLIDAY DURING TERM-TIME**

**Welsh Assembly guidance states:**

*“In term-time parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays and authorisation remains at the discretion of the Head Teacher, but this holiday must not exceed 10 days in any academic year”. Exceptional circumstances remain at the discretion of the Head (The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010.*

**The school will only authorise holidays in exceptional circumstances and where attendance for the previous 12 months is at or above 96%. (This has been agreed by the governors in consultation with our main feeder high school)**

Exceptional circumstances remain at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Reasons may include:

- Those families of serving armed forces personnel
- Parents of a child experiencing a life limiting illness
- Family that has suffered acute trauma
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any other circumstance that is viewed as exceptional (if an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence)

If the Head Teacher's decision is not to agree the request, then the holiday will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (G code in register).

Local Authority leaflets on taking holidays during term time are relayed to parents regularly.

All requests for holiday leave should be in writing, at least **four** weeks before the holiday, and the application should be made by parent/parents with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves.

The following factors will also be considered when assessing requests – no one factor will be regarded as conclusive:

- The time of year of proposed trip
- The length and purpose of the holiday
- The duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning
- The circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents

## **10. EXTENDED OVERSEAS TRIPS**

Considerations for extended overseas trips for those children from ethnic backgrounds will be considered carefully in the context of Conwy LA guidance and Welsh Government guidance

## **11. LATENESS**

A pupil's punctuality for school is a legal requirement (Inclusion & Pupil Support Welsh Government Circular 47/2006) and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late (L) or arrives after registration closes (U) are guilty of an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court, or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for the unauthorised absences.

The school will work with pupils, parents and ESW service to address issues of lateness.

## **12. THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICE**

The ESW will:-

- Identify areas of good practice relating to improving attendance and disseminate to schools
- Analyse attendance data both nationally and locally to identify areas of improvement
- Monitor the correct use of registration codes
- Support schools in improving outcomes for pupils

Legal action to enforce school attendance can only be taken by the ESW service..

### **13. REFERRING A CASE TO THE EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICE**

The Head teacher is responsible for all referrals to the ESW and these decisions will be made on a case by case basis with appreciation for the time constraints on the ESW service. The following factors will be considered:

- A pupil fails to attend schools continuously for ten school days;
- A pattern of irregular attendance is either continuing or worsening (sporadic days or blocks of absence);
- Parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attend school and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the school;
- Condoned unjustified absence is increasingly a problem;
- Or the parents ask for excessive authorised absence.

The school's own procedures for dealing with absence will be exhausted before a referral is made to the ESWS. These procedures will include

- Action by the class tutor, as part of their day-to-day duties;
- Involvement of others within the school e.g. Secretary, Head teacher or Deputy Head;
- Contact with the parents via telephone
- Inviting parents into school for a meeting

### **14. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- The school's commitment to achieving high levels of attendance are made clear to pupils, staff and parents.
- Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality.
- Individual attendance targets are discussed with all pupils
- Where appropriate 'Reward Schemes' will be set up with individual pupils to reward improved attendance/punctuality.
- Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
- The School will write to parents of pupils whose attendance or punctuality is below 85% in a term at the end of each term.
- Praise letters will be sent to parents who improve their child's attendance or punctuality following a warning letter in the previous term
- If a second warning letter is issued, parents/carers will be required to speak to the Headteacher regarding the impact on their education and development

- The school will evaluate strategies to improve attendance in a robust manner