

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,
CRAYFORD**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Autumn 2016

**To be reviewed: Autumn 2017
Teaching and Learning – Mrs Schmidt**

Mission Statement

The teachers and governors of St Joseph's provide a broad, balanced curriculum to enable each child to achieve the highest standards of education in a Catholic ethos.

THE AIMS OF ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL ARE:

- to nurture the uniqueness of each individual as a member of God's family
- to ensure that the Catholic faith is at the heart of the whole school experience
- to create a well ordered supportive environment in an atmosphere conducive to learning where every child feels confident and safe
- to create an atmosphere of reconciliation, where pupils can accept the consequences of their own actions, and be encouraged to make more responsible future choices
- to deliver a relevant curriculum with equal access for all pupils
- to encourage and support each child to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable
- to encourage each child to become a concerned compassionate member of society determined to promote justice and peace
- to promote good working relationships based on mutual cooperation and trust
- to provide a welcoming place for parents
- to work in harmony with the parish and the local community.

1. Introduction and background

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff and Governors. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good attendance and punctuality through class competitions and Teddy Always Here, Denzil Don't be Late (Juniors) and Lola's Never Late (Infants) and certificates.

3. Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root of the problem. We may use outside agencies to help.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Parent Support Adviser or Education Welfare Officer. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

5. Children Missing out on Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life.

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home. Parents must notify the school in writing of their intention to home educate. The school will take the child off roll and inform the Local Authority of the decision.

The school will monitor pupils' attendance (see Attendance Policy) and in-line with its Safeguarding duties under the Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 will investigate unexplained absences by telephoning the parents on the morning of the unexplained absence. Where a child misses 10 days or more without permission, the school will notify the Local Authority.

The Local Authority monitors details of pupils who are regularly absent and the school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer. The school will write to parents to highlight attendance concerns. If there is no improvement a second letter is sent inviting parents for a meeting with the Head Teacher/EWO to discuss concerns. If after this meeting there is no improvement an official referral is made to the Local Authority and a home visit is arranged.

If a child's absence raises a child protection concern, Social Care will be contacted.

6. Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message (Option 1)
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.
- Write in the Contact Book the reason for absence on the child's return

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence, by 10.00 am, if we have not heard from you by the set time;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 87%.

Please see Appendix A

7. The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

7. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.55 am and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the bell is rung.

Registers are marked by 9.00 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.20 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality. Please see Appendix B.

8. Holidays in Term Time:

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school.

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupils continuity of learning. Family holidays are not considered an exceptional reason for requesting absence from school.

Exceptional Circumstances

Very occasionally a child may need to take time off school for an exceptional circumstance, e.g. to attend a family wedding, a sporting event. In these cases the governors may choose to grant leave.

A request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 95% or above for the past year.

9. Targets

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

10. People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Headteacher and the Governing Body

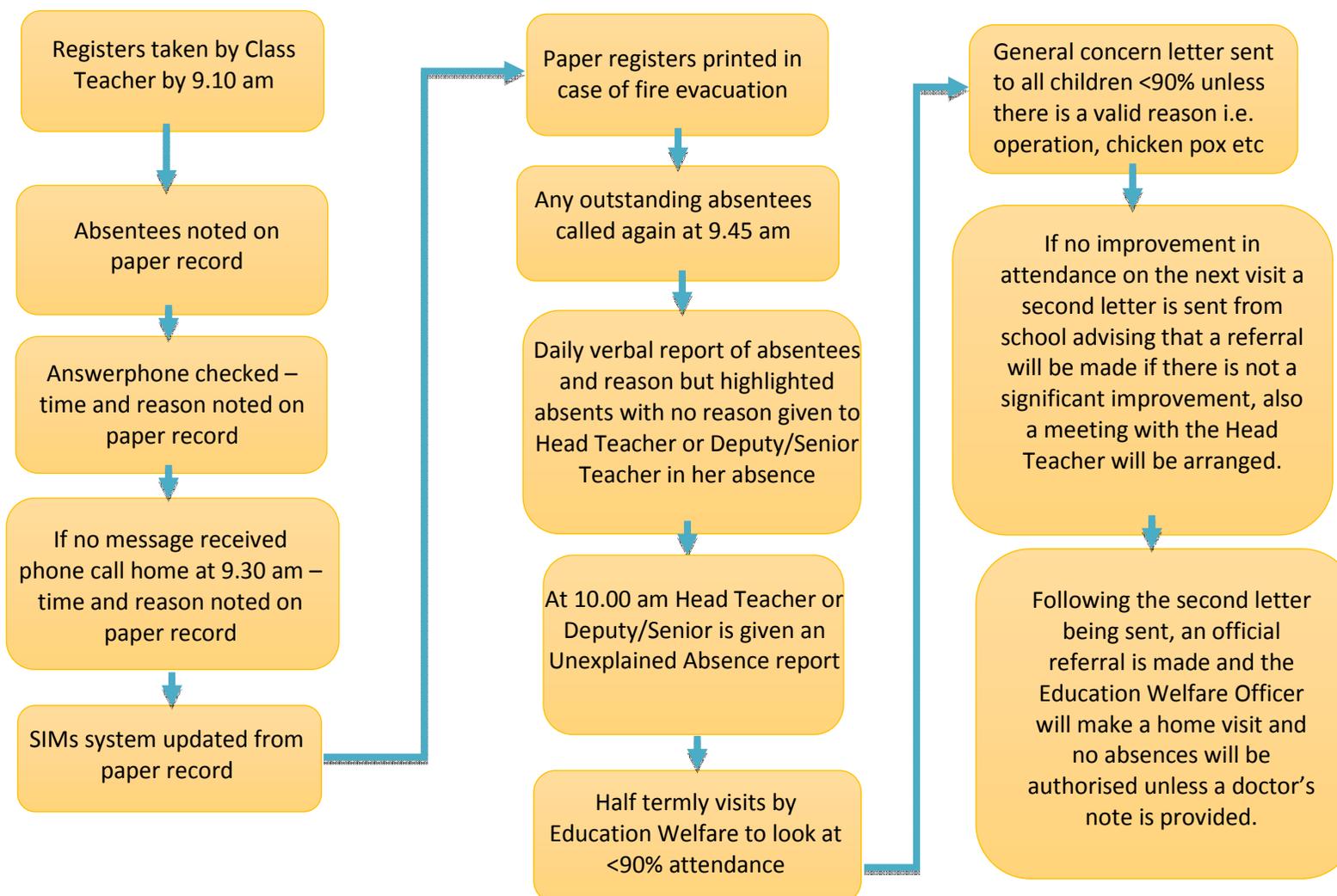
11. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed: **Date:**
Chair of Governors

Attendance Monitoring



Lateness Monitoring

