## Attendance and Truancy

| Date | Review Date | Coordinator | Nominated Governor |
|------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 3rd February 2020 | 3rd February 2021 | Kathy Glass (Attendance Officer) | Dianne Porter |

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures:  Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)
- Data Protection: a toolkit for schools (DfE)
- Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Information Commissioner's Office

We have in place a no nonsense and no excuses policy as we believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We have a duty to monitor pupils' attendance through daily registration and will address all poor or irregular attendance by contacting and discussing the situation with parents.

We will inform the local authority of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed ten days or more without permission. The local authority must have in place 'robust procedures and policies' to enable them to meet their duty in relation to CME.

We have in place a First Day Contact Supervisor who is responsible for monitoring pupil attendance and will make contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence.

We have a duty to establish the whereabouts of all absent pupils and will send a member of the school personnel to a child's home if contact cannot be made by phone with the child's parents/ carers. We will inform the police if there is no answer when school personnel visit the family home.

For all pupils we have in place at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each pupil.

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel pupils are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We have a duty to ensure that all parents are aware of our 'legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school.' Parents have a duty to ensure their children are well behaved and attend school regularly as 'good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects'.

We are aware that 'parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school' but they can also be applied for misbehaviour by pupils outside compulsory school age such as sixth form pupils or pupils at a maintained nursery. While 'penalty notices for parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded also apply only to children of compulsory school age who are registered at a school.'

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

We are aware that leave of absence can only we granted to a pupil only in exceptional circumstances;

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all pupils.

We are aware that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will entirely replace the current Data Protection Act (DPA) by making radical changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that schools, academies and other educational establishments adhere to under the DPA. The principal aim of the GDPR is to strengthen and unify the safety and security of all data held within an organisation.

We acknowledge the new guidance given to all schools in the 'Data protection: a toolkit for schools' (DfE April 2018) regarding the appropriate use of personal data.

We aim to be judged at least good in all school inspections by ensuring that standards for all pupils are higher than schools of a similar size and that standards continue to improve faster than the national trend. We believe we will achieve this by having in place a home-school agreement that all parents have signed up to and by improving pupil attendance and truancy.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this school.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

**Our Lady and St Joseph School**

## Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To ensure the safeguarding of pupils by establishing the whereabouts of all absent pupils by making contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

## Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

## Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body:

- has delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promotes the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;
- ensures compliance with all statutory pupil registration regulations;
- has appointed a First Day Contact Supervisor;
- ensures the First Day Contact Supervisor identifies and follows up all absence and lateness;
- ensures that the attendance policy is carried out;
- sets statutory attendance targets for the year that are realistic and challenging in order to raise school attendance;
- asks questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitors termly progress towards these targets by considering the following questions:

  ☐ Has attendance improved?
  ☐ Has punctuality improved?
  ☐ Has parental response to absences improved?

- ensures the Headteacher exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July;
- ensures the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a child's education;
- has responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- has nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- ensures funding is in place to support this policy;
- ensures this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;

- ensures all policies are made available to parents;
- involves the School Council in:

  ☐ determining this policy with the Governing Body;
  ☐ discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
  ☐ organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
  ☐ reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body

- makes effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- has nominated a link governor to:

  ☐ visit the school regularly;
  ☐ work closely with the Headteacher and the First Day Contact Supervisor;
  ☐ ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
  ☐ ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
  ☐ attend training related to this policy;
  ☐ report to the Governing Body every term;
  ☐ annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

- has responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

## Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the First Day Contact Supervisor by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- ensure the safeguarding of pupils by establishing the whereabouts of all absent pupils by making contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence;
- work with the School Council to develop this policy;
- work in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- address all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to affect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- send to parents at the end of each term an attendance report on their child;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;

- send out data sheets for parents to confirm or correct pupil contact details;
- check all pupil emergency contact telephone numbers to ensure they are correct;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- attend termly meetings with the EWO;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- question any parental explanation for pupil absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with parents if necessary if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for term time leave of absence the head will consider the:

  - ☐ time of year of the proposed trip
  - ☐ length and purpose of the request
  - ☐ impact on continuity of learning
  - ☐ circumstances of the family
  - ☐ overall attendance of the child
  - ☐ wishes of the parents

- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all pupils;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- give good attendance awards to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- improve teaching in order to improve pupil engagement;
- work closely with the link governor and First Day Contact Supervisor;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- recommend to the Governing Body the use of a parenting contract:

  - ☐ in cases of truancy/poor attendance;
  - ☐ when a pupil has consistently misbehaved or has been permanently excluded or excluded for a fixed period;
  - ☐ when it is considered that parenting is a factor in the truancy or bad behaviour of a child and where the parent appears to be in need of support.

- ensure risk assessments are:

☐ in place and cover all aspects of this policy;
☐ accurate and suitable;
☐ reviewed annually;
☐ easily available for all school personnel.

- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:

☐ monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
☐ achieving results above the national average
☐ looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires

- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

## Role of the First Day Contact Supervisor

The First Day Contact Supervisor is responsible for:

- monitoring pupil attendance and will make contact with parents if the school has not been informed of their child's absence;
- implementing this policy with the Head;
- ensuring the following procedure is carried out each day:

☐ Collect registers once registration has been completed;
☐ Monitor registers;
☐ Listen to absence calls and text messages;
☐ Read emails from parents;
☐ Make a list of absent pupils without an explanation;
☐ Double check the list before calling parents/carers to establish the whereabouts of absent pupils;
☐ Contact parents/carers if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.30am;
☐ If unable to make contact with parents/carers then call everyone on the contact list;
☐ Leave voicemail and text messages in all cases;
☐ Use school intelligence to establish any information about the unexplained absence;
☐ Check if the absent pupil;
☐ If still no contact with the parents/carers then repeat the calls;
☐ Contact the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
☐ If still no contact then the school Vulnerable Pupils Group may decide to send appropriate school personnel to the family home;
☐ If no contact has been made even after visiting the family home of an absent pupil then inform children's services / the police;
☐ Continue to contact the parents/carers throughout the day until contact is made;
☐ Inform the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the situation.
☐ Keep a log of all actions.

- keeping an up to date list of at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each pupil;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Head informed of attendance figures and trends;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's truancy;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- compiling attendance data reports for the Head, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date.

## Role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will:

- appoint education welfare officers (EWO) who will promote good attendance in schools;
- establish effective working relationships with schools, pupils and parents to ensure educational entitlement and regular attendance;
- ensure pupils attend school regularly;
- investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance;
- provide support and counselling for children and their families;
- work with local agencies providing education, health and social services for pupils with specific needs;
- work with disaffected pupils;
- work with pupils who may be excluded;
- find alternative educational provision for excluded pupils;
- support schools at Common Assessment Framework meetings;
- undertake truancy watch patrols with the local police.

## Role of the Data Protection Officer

The Data Protection Officer will:
- have expert knowledge of data protection law and practices;
- inform the school and school personnel about their obligations to comply with the GDPR and other data protection laws;
- ensure data management is strengthened and unified;
- monitor compliance with the GDPR and other data protection laws;
- manage internal data protection activities;
- ensure risk and impact assessments are conducted in accordance with ICO guidance;
- report data breaches within 72 hours;
- ensure individuals have greater control over their personal data;
- ensure that prior to the processing of an individual's data that:

  ☐ the process is in line with ICO guidance;
  ☐ the process is transparent;
  ☐ the individual will be notified;
  ☐ the notification is written in a form that is understandable to older pupils;

☐ when sharing an individual's data to a third party outside of school that details for the sharing are clearly defined within the notifications.

- share an individual's data where it is a legal requirement to provide such information;
- process all written subject access requests from individuals within 40 days of receiving them;
- have in place a formal contract or service level agreement with a chosen data processor who is GDPR compliant;
- ensure the secure disposal of redundant data and IT hardware holding data in compliance with ICO guidance;
- train school personnel;
- conduct audits.
- be the first point of contact for supervisory authorities and for individuals whose data is processed;
- keep up to date documentation of all data protection activities.
- work closely with the Headteacher and nominated governor;
- periodically report to the Headteacher and to the Governing Body;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

## Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure registers are up to date;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations.

## Role of Parents

Parents/carers will:

- comply with this policy;
- work as partners with the school in the education of their children;
- ensure their children of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education;
- ensure their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their children on time and bring them to school on time;
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- avoid to take family holidays in term time;

- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for a leave of absence request will consider the:

  - ☐ time of year of the proposed trip
  - ☐ length and purpose of the absence
  - ☐ impact on continuity of learning
  - ☐ circumstances of the family
  - ☐ overall attendance of the child
  - ☐ wishes of the parents

- be aware that where parents fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised;
- be aware that it is not advisable to apply for a term time holiday during the following times of the year:

  - ☐ the first six weeks of any academic year
  - ☐ during Y6 transition week
  - ☐ during Y6 SATs week

- be encouraged to take an active interest in their child's work and to take an active role in the life of the school by attending:

  - ☐ parents and open evenings
  - ☐ parent-teacher consultations
  - ☐ class assemblies
  - ☐ school concerts
  - ☐ fundraising and social events

- encourage effort and achievement;
- encourage completion of homework and return it to school;
- provide the right conditions for homework to take place;
- expect their child to hand in homework on time;
- join the school in celebrating success of their child's learning;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

## Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.

## Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- arriving at school on time
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- accepting sanctions if they are caught playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

## Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents may be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher and EWO to explain their child's repeated absence.
- All absences must be covered by one of the following ways:
- Letter - Email – Proof of dental or doctors appointments – A completed Leave of Absence Form to be signed by the Headteacher.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then the EWO will take the appropriate action.

## Dealing with Lateness

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- the Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

## Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- a programme of monitoring and support

The Police must be informed immediately if a pupil leaves school without prior permission.

## Absence

**Holidays during term time** – parents are encouraged to take a family holiday not in term time. Leave of absence only allowed in <u>exceptional circumstances</u>.

**Religious Observance** – a maximum of three days absence may be allowed in <u>exceptional circumstances</u> for religious observance.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

## Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters
- Annual report to parents;
- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- Text messages
- Email

## Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:

☐ the importance of good attendance and punctuality
☐ all aspects of this policy
☐ the use and understanding of attendance codes
☐ authorised and unauthorised attendance
☐ looking at trends and patterns
☐ bullying
☐ the needs of vulnerable groups

- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

## Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

## Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

## Linked Policies

- Admission and Attendance Registers
- Anti-bullying
- Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Home School Agreement
- Inclusion
- Outside Agencies
- Pastoral Care
- Pupil Behaviour and Discipline
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Troubled and Vulnerable Children

## See Appendices Documents section on Policies for Schools Website

- Frequency of Policy Monitoring
- Monitoring Implementation and Policy Effectiveness Action Plan
- Initial Equality Impact Assessment

**Our Lady and St Joseph School**

- Policy Evaluation
- Policy Approval Form

| Headteacher: | Sean Flood | Date: | 3rd February 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chair of Governing Body: | Derek Vitali | Date: | 3rd February 2021 |