



ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL RAMSBOTTOM

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

Our school is proud to be part of the Roman Catholic Church in the parish of St Joseph's. Our mission is to serve God, uphold the worth and dignity of every person and enable them to develop their talents. Everything we do is rooted in the values of the Gospel, as we seek to deepen faith, strengthen hope and grow in love in a respectful, safe and happy environment.

Rationale

St Joseph's is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Bury attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with the Head will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day stating the reason for the absence. A note should then be sent into school on the day the child returns explaining the absence.

If no contact is made by parents/carers explaining the absence on the first day the school will try to phone to secure an explanation. Where the school is unable to make contact by phone a letter may be sent, or a message left on an answerphone.

If, after the child returns to school no explanation of absence is given by the parents/carers, the school may write again. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 4 weeks if no explanation can be obtained.

Regular register checks are carried out by the SAO (School Attendance Officer) or a member of school staff allocated this task. If attendance falls below 85%, a letter will be sent home by the Head Teacher requesting an improvement and offering support. If attendance rate does not improve, the Head Teacher will liaise with the School Attendance Officer or designated member of school staff who may contact the parents/carers by letter, do a home visit or invite parents/carers to a formal meeting.

Persistent Absence (Defined in legislation as 15% or more absences)

Either authorised or unauthorised. A child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment.

Onward referral to support services (School Attendance Team etc)

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for several absences will be discussed with the school's Link SAO.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Health Adviser / School Nurse etc, if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's link SAO.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education: for example, the Home/School agreement and reminders on the newsletter.

Requests for absences in term time

The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers are not expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

Parents are asked to explain in writing why their request is for exceptional circumstances. Proof may be requested to cover the school's decision if it is challenged by Bury Local Authority.

If the request is denied school will inform the parent/carer of the reason by letter. If the parents/carers choose to continue with the planned holiday it will be taken as an **unauthorised absence**.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Head Teachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27th February 2004.

A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Overt Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term-time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed at 9.00am)

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority at £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of date of issue, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days of date of issue. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to legal action being taken against you.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

Children who have excellent attendance (100% or very close to this) are awarded a certificate to congratulate them at the end of each term. The school will also hold a termly raffle for those children with 100% attendance and they will go into a draw with a chance to win a gift voucher.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

The registration system

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

Alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. On back up copies, entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid).

Register Security

The registers must be safely stored. Registers are stored on the school's computer system.

Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy and the school's policies on equal opportunities.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the School Development Plan.

September 2021

Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

2 Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration