



# St Joseph's College Attendance Policy

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	- Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Half-Term 2023
<b>Next Review Date</b>	- Spring 1 <sup>st</sup> Half-Term 2024
<b>Policy Author</b>	- Mr D Nelson – Associate Assistant Headteacher

**Chair of Governors signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Nelson', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

## Introduction

The staff at St Joseph's College are committed, in partnership with parents, carers, students, governors and the Local Authority (LA) to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud. We aim for an environment that enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence and achieve their goals.

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly. All students should be at school on time, during term time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly.

A good attendance record is an essential part of ensuring success at school. Students who are not present cannot learn. Irregular and/or poor attendance and punctuality undermine/s the education process. There is a direct link between good attendance and good achievement.

At St Joseph's College we strive for maximum attendance figures. Sometimes attendance is beyond the immediate control of the College, but we actively pursue the goal of 100% attendance for all students.

Individual and group absences need to be carefully monitored and investigated. Students, parents, and carers need to be made aware that unjustified absences will not be tolerated.

Parents and carers are expected to support the College in ensuring that the students attend and remain on the school site each day. They should ensure that the students arrive in good time and inform the College as soon as possible of any legitimate reason for a student's absence.

There are many occasions when we may need to contact parents/guardians/carers about many things, including absence, so we need to always have your up-to-date contact numbers.

Parents/ carers whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. If they fail to do this, they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Attendance Policy

**School starts at 8.15. Gates open at 07:45. AM registration closes at 08:25.**

- Students are expected to attend every day that the College is open for students. The College calendar clearly indicates the term dates.
- Students are expected to arrive on site by 8.00am, in good time for registration at 8.15am. The school gates will be open by 07:45. Lateness can be a form of truancy and the College will contact home where there is a pattern of regular or frequent lateness. If your child is going to be late or absent, please telephone attendance on 020 8761 1426 and select option one followed by option one again, if there is no answer please leave a voicemail clearly stating the student's full name, class and reason for absence or lateness. You can also report an absence via the MyEd app. Voicemails and messages sent before 08:00 will be logged prior to the register being taken and will prevent an absence alert being sent.
- If your child arrives after 08:15 they will need to sign in at the attendance office and be marked as late, if 2 or more late marks are recorded in one week they will have a late detention. If your child arrives

after 08:25 (close of AM Registration) they will be asked to give the reason and will be sent to AR if we have not been notified of a valid reason for lateness by a Parent or Carer

A good start to the day is essential for young people and is an important habit to learn whilst they are young. It is a key skill employers look for in candidates for jobs.

- If no message is received from a parent/carer on **each** day of absence, the College will make efforts to contact the parent/carer, usually by text message, seeking an explanation for the absence.
- The College will monitor the attendance figures for students and will send out a stage one warning letter to advise parents/carers that attendance has fallen below 96%. When this letter is received, all further absences will need to be supported with sufficient medical evidence. This can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, text/email appointment confirmations etc. Input from GPs should only be sought where there are complex health needs/persistent absence issues, and a welfare and health care plan needs to be put in place at school.
- If attendance continues to fall parents/carers will be invited into a meeting at the school with the Attendance officer and/or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss anything relating to poor attendance. This will allow the parent/carer to talk to the school about the issues that are affecting their child's attendance and enable the school to put an attendance support plan in place to help the parent or child to improve their attendance.

### **Requests for leave of Absence and Absences During Term Time**

- I. Leave of absence from school will only be granted in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Government guidelines on how schools should deal with requests for absence make it clear that Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers "may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances" for doing so. Leave of absence from schools is not a right and each request will be viewed individually.
- II. A leave of absence request form is available from reception and should be completed and submitted at least 14 days prior to the absence date for it to be considered. Booking documents and any supporting evidence must be submitted with the request. The Deputy Headteacher /Headteacher will examine all requests for extenuating circumstances. If there is not sufficient reason, the leave of absence will be declined and recorded as unauthorised on the register using a G code.
- III. If parents/carers do take a student out of school without authorisation, there is a possibility that this may be referred to the Education Welfare Service for consideration of a fine or prosecution.
- IV. Parent Contracts are used by the College – these are formal contracts between the Education Welfare Service, the Parent, the Pupil, and the College.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

We have a legal requirement with the Local Authority to monitor children's attendance at school and we do this on a day-to-day basis. If your child's attendance causes concern we will contact you by letter, telephone, or home visit by the Attendance or Education Welfare Officer. Your child may be placed on a school attendance support plan and monitored by the local authority.

### **Concerns**

All parents/carers will receive a letter if their child's attendance becomes a concern. This letter must include the legal requirement of the Local authority. It is not a school sanction, but it is our duty to inform you of what may happen as a result of poor attendance.

If attendance continues to fall we will invite you in for an attendance support and planning meeting and may involve outside agencies to support you and your child, e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Early Help, CAMHS.

## **What does the law say about school attendance?**

All parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs.

Children must legally be in education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16. The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning. Raising the participation age means that your child will have to stay in some form of education or training until the end of the academic year when they turn 18.

## **What can happen if poor attendance is referred to the Local Authority**

### **School attendance order**

Should you fail to register your child at a school and not make suitable alternative education arrangements, the council may issue a School Attendance Order requiring you to register your child at a named school.

### **Non-attendance at school**











Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence and if, with support from the school/academy your child's attendance fails to improve, the council will consider one of two courses of action:

1. Penalty fine of £60 (if paid within 21 days), rising to £120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days have elapsed). Failing to pay the fine will result in prosecution and being summoned to appear at the Magistrates Court.
2. Start a criminal investigation which could lead to you being prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. A Penalty Notice can be issued if:
  - A child has poor attendance (eight sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absence in the last six weeks)
  - Ten sessions/5 days or more of absence due to an unauthorised leave of absence during term time
  - A child who has been excluded from school is seen in a public place in the first five days of an exclusion.

It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure regular school attendance and failure to do so will result in each parent being charged with the offence. If convicted, both parents will be punished by the courts, resulting in a fine of up to £2,500 for each parent and / or up to three months custodial sentence.

If a child lives with a family friend or relative for a period, who has day to day care of the child, each responsible adult is considered as a 'Parent' under the Education Act and can equally be charged with the same offence and prosecuted.

## **How do we encourage good attendance**

-  Creating a positive environment where young people feel safe and secure.
-  Making St Joseph's a lively, rewarding, and interesting place to be.
-  Developing a system of rewards for good attendance and punctuality.
-  Being sympathetic and supportive to pupils who experience problems in school.
-  Ensuring careful monitoring of attendance data regularly takes place.
-  Reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality.
-  Offering help and advice to resolve any difficulties the pupil or parents may have in fulfilling these responsibilities.
-  Establish a mechanism for working with those parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be having difficulties in attending school.
-  Involving the Education Welfare Officer or relevant professional in tackling attendance issues.
-  Having strict policies to keep your child safe.

- 🏰 Operating clear boundaries and sanctions to prevent young people from truanting.
- 🏰 Investigating when students have unauthorised absences.
- 🏰 Giving families strategies to promote good attendance.

### Attendance Contacts

Strategic Lead for School Attendance Mr D Nelson – Associate Assistant Headteacher	<a href="mailto:dnelson@sjc.ac">dnelson@sjc.ac</a>
Attendance and Welfare lead Miss C Kingston	<a href="mailto:attendance@sjc.ac">attendance@sjc.ac</a>

## Attendance Management at St Joseph’s College

