



Saint Joseph's
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Version 4.5 September 2021

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
CHURCH ROAD
LAVERSTOCK
SALISBURY
SP1 1QY

Success Criteria:

Attendance benchmarks set for whole school and sub-groups by Head and Governors, and supported by EWS, are met or surpassed, with specific focus on: improved tracking, earlier intervention, strengthened school support systems for parents and students, reduced Persistent Absenteeism and increased motivational and/or rewards to model best practice and encourage a spirit of aspiration and ownership.

Context/Aim:

"If schooling is to be effective, regular attendance is a prerequisite, hence securing it must be a high priority for all. A school's rate of attendance can be regarded as a significant indicator of its effective performance, hence the vigilance with which attendance is monitored and the effectiveness with which absences are followed up can have far reaching consequences. Consequently, it is the extent of the rate of unauthorised absences which indicates how well a school is doing and what scope exists for improvement." (DES 1989)

At St Joseph's we believe that education is the basis that underpins a positive successful adult life. The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day (190 days per academic year) and therefore to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and there is clear evidence that shows strong links between excellent school attendance and excellent GCSE results.

St Joseph's believes that parents and teachers are in partnership working together for the good of the students. Therefore, our expectations are high regarding attendance and punctuality. Poor attendance affects a student's learning and poor punctuality affects the whole class learning. Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success and therefore it is important to deal with this as soon as possible. The Government reiterate that regular school attendance is essential and that students without good reason for absence may present a safeguarding concern; they may become victims of crime or abuse or may be drawn into criminal activities themselves or be subject inadvertently to neglect if low/non-attendance is not challenged.

At St Joseph's we believe that in challenging attendance and punctuality that falls below what is expected, and doing this at the earliest point possible, appropriate support can be made available. These expectations and interventions ensure that student chances of underperformance are minimised and the vital skills of self-discipline, responsibility and consequences for one's own actions and choices become habit forming, attributes that are essential for when learners enter the world of work.

Monitoring Procedures:

Attendance officer to provide SL with weekly data; SL to use with DOLs and tutors to make earlier contact and for all attendance initiatives to be logged on SIMS initiatives; escalation to SAMs and regular meetings with EWO to track school progress towards targets; termly meetings with Deputy Head and then reported to Governor's Pastoral and Ethos Committee; Head's report to Full Governing Body will mention attendance patterns and progress towards targets, as will Head's/Deputy Head Pastoral's meetings with School Improvement Adviser.

<u>By Whom:</u> Governors' Pastoral and Ethos Committee	<u>When:</u> Termly	<u>How:</u> Reports to the Pastoral and Ethos Committee
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Evaluation:

To be completed via performance management of attendance team by SL and Deputy Head Pastoral, using data and reports from SIMS and local/national benchmarks that are presented to Head and for Governor approval.

<u>By Whom:</u> Head teacher and the Pastoral & Ethos Governors Committee	<u>When:</u> Annually	<u>How:</u> SLT and the Pastoral and Ethos Committee to review Policy
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Revision History:			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Approved and Ratified</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Additional notes</u>
4.5	September 2021	September 2022	Update following policy changes
4.4	September 2020	September 2021	Re-write to reflect staffing update and COVID 19
4.3	September 2019	August 2020	Update following appointment of SL for attendance
4.2	April 2018	April 2019	
4.1	March 2017	March 2018	None
4.0	November 2015	November 2016	Re-Write
3.0	January 2014	November 2015	-
2.2	November 2012	November 2013	-
2.1	November 2011	November 2012	-
2.0	November 2010	November 2011	-

Key Personnel:	
Head teacher	The Head teacher is the only person who can authorise leave in exceptional circumstances
Deputy Head Teacher (Pastoral)	Mr A Bazen
Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Link(s)	Mr O Ford (Attendance) / Mr C Bartel (Behaviour)
Attendance Officer	Mrs Elaine Oakley
Directors of Learning	Mrs A Marshall (Y7), Miss C Moss (Y8), Mr N Brown (Y9), Mrs C Blake (Y10), Mrs S Barratt & Mr C Morris (Y11)

Vision Statement:	
St Joseph's is a co-educational, 11-16 Catholic voluntary-aided school in the diocese of Clifton and the county of Wiltshire. Our aim is to provide a caring educational environment where each person is valued and is given the dignity due to a child of God.	
At the heart of our school is the Christian vision of the human person. We want each member of our community to grow as an individual witness to the gospel values of love, truth and justice. We want each pupil to be healthy in mind, body and spirit.	
Each member of our community should feel safe and secure in the learning environment. We aim to develop a sense of self-discipline and responsibility in our pupils. Everyone in our community should show respect for themselves, respect for others and respect for the environment.	
We believe that each pupil should have the opportunity to enjoy and achieve to their full potential. We are committed to praising and celebrating achievement. We want our pupils to have high expectations of themselves to understand the value of service to others and our responsibility as stewards of the environment. Everyone has a contribution to make in helping to build the common good. We aim to equip our pupils with the ability to make good choices in their lives based on the positive relationships and values they have learned in St Joseph's.	
We aim to help each of our pupils to develop morally and spiritually. We want them to achieve economic well-being while being mindful of the needs of others who are less fortunate.	
We are committed to aspiring for excellence in all that we do for the sake of the Gospel.	
Head teacher	

National Policies and guidance/courses referred to and incorporated into SJCS Policy:

Document/Course Title:	Document/Course Date:
School Attendance Departmental Advice Education and Inspections Act 2006 KCSiE	DfE October 2014 Section 109 September 2021

Other SJCS Policies that relate to this Policy:

Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Child Protection Policy

Legal Framework

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 109) states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school. The school will work with parents/carers to support the good attendance of their son/daughter. It remains the responsibility of the Local Authority (hereafter LA) to make sure parents meet their responsibilities and attendance enforcement will be carried out by the LA.

Schools in England and Wales are no longer permitted to authorise absence from school for anything but the most exceptional circumstances, (e.g. a funeral). No request can be considered for more than one day's authorised absence. Only the Headteacher can authorise the absence due to exceptional circumstances.

From the beginning of the academic year 2015/16, the government reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. Therefore, a pupil is now considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90% (19 days of absence). Attendance will be monitored, and persistent absentees and their families identified and supported.

The Pastoral Manager and Attendance Officer will work closely with the senior Leader for Attendance (and other members of the Pastoral Team, including tutors and Directors of Learning and SENCo as appropriate) and the parents/carers to aid improved attendance.

St Joseph's Catholic School Attendance Policy Rationale

1. When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take important steps towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in their exams.
2. The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as a part of a school club or team, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting their social skills, confidence and self-esteem.
3. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. However, where school attendance problems occur the key to successfully resolving these is engaging the child through collaborative working between parent, school and the local authority.
4. This document sets out a structure for how St Joseph's Catholic School will aim to maintain excellent attendance for all pupils, as well how we will monitor and action potential attendance problems.

Attendance Procedures

Students are expected to be registered twice a day for attendance (as well as during each lesson). The two attendance registers happen in the morning (8.55am) and following Period 3 (12:05pm).

Students are encouraged to maintain a minimum 97% attendance throughout the school year – we class this as “outstanding” attendance. Students who drop to or below 90% will be regarded as a persistent absentee. 90% attendance represents half a day off every week. Over a five-year period this equates to half a year of education missed for a child.

Role of the Parent

Within the partnership spirit it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the student attends school each day and arrives on time. Students should only be absent for genuine reasons such as sickness, medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (e.g. funerals) etc. Parents must notify the school before 9:00am via an email to attendance@sjcs.org.uk or in situations where this is not possible, a phone call to reception if a student is absent from school on **each day** of absence. This is a parental duty to support the school in ensuring the safeguarding of their children. The school, for its part, must identify a reason on the day of absence for any student subject to a S17 or S47 plan for whom no contact by parent has been made, reporting any unexplained, unauthorised or non-attendance of students, subject to these care plans to social care on the first day of non-contact from parents.

If your child is absent from school with an illness for five days or more, the school would expect them to have seen a health professional. For illnesses with this length of time a medical certificate, copy of prescription, a note from the GP surgery confirming your child has been to see the GP or a stamped medical appointment card needs to be provided to the school. Failing to provide this may result in either unauthorised absence or future unauthorised absences until medical evidence has been provided.

Although the school appreciates difficulties many parents have in arranging holiday leave during school holiday time, they are asked not to make arrangements for holidays during term time as it will not be authorised. The Headteacher can only authorise holidays in term time in exceptional circumstances e.g. a family funeral. At other times holidays during term time cannot be authorised. The School may ask for a death certificate to be provided before exceptional circumstance leave is authorised, if the leave request is for a funeral abroad. The maximum amount of days which will be authorised by the Headteacher is ten school days. Any other days which exceeds the authorised ten days will be marked as unauthorised holiday and this may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal proceedings from Wiltshire LA.

An extended absence for holidays will inevitably have an adverse effect on student progress and achievement and this is particularly more important during Years 9,10 and 11; that is not to say that holidays will be looked upon more favourably in Y7&8, they will not, as explained in the preceding paragraph. Teachers will not set work for students on holiday during term time and it is the responsibility of the student to catch up on any missed work.

Absences just before a term ends or at the start of any new term or persistent regular non-attendance on patterns of days/weeks/months may not be authorised unless medical evidence from a GP/Hospital is provided. This will be decided under the discretion of the Headteacher or by delegated responsibility to the following staff ONLY – a senior colleague deputising for the Head, the Senior Leader in charge of attendance or the Attendance Officer.

Role of the School

Within the partnership spirit it is the responsibility of the school to work with parents in ensuring the maximum attendance possible. The school will work with parents by ensuring constant communication and detailed procedures which will identify problems early on.

The school has a duty to support parents who may be experiencing difficulty in ensuring good attendance for the student. This support will be given in consultation with the Form Tutor, Director of Learning, SENCo, Attendance Officer, Pastoral Manager, SLT, Learning Mentors and the Education Welfare Service, and where appropriate other agencies.

Monitoring Attendance

Student attendance is monitored by the:

- Form tutor at registration
- Subject teacher in each lesson
- Director of Learning or (Year Leader), particularly for students who are not reaching progress because of poor attendance
- School Attendance Officer and Welfare Officer
- SLT member in charge of attendance and punctuality
- Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Deputy Head Pastoral
- Governors Pastoral and Ethos Committee

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

This is when the Attendance Officer accepts that there is a genuine reason for absence which has been supported by a communication from the parent and the student's attendance history is satisfactory or has not dropped to or below 90%. Examples are:

- Illness, medical and dental appointments
- Interviews with prospective employers and colleges
- Dual registration
- Approved educational off-site activities
- Representation in sport or other areas
- Religious observance
- Public performances (licenses must be obtained from the LA and sent to the school)
- Special situations and occasions (e.g. funerals, caring for known young carers)
 - NB: absence for pupil or family birthdays is not acceptable.

The Attendance Officer must bring any concerns regarding the above to the Director of Learning, Pastoral Manager or Senior Leader for Attendance dependent upon context (e.g. too much time off for performances or a pattern to illness).

Unauthorised Absences

This is when the Attendance Officer does not accept there is a genuine reason for absence even if it has been supported by a note from the parent and/or a pupil's attendance has fallen to or below 90% and is not supported by documentary, medical proof. If an absence has been supported by a note from the parent and the absence is recorded as unauthorised the parent must be informed immediately. Examples are:

- Known truancy
- Absent with no communication from parent (regardless of reason)
- Working (this is reported to the Headteacher and DSL)
- Time off for birthdays, family celebrations
- Holidays
- Looking after siblings (this must be reported to the Headteacher and the D/DSL)
- Errands for parents (e.g. shopping, dropping off younger siblings to primary school – this is reported to the Headteacher and the D/DSL).
- Persistent absenteeism without documentary medical proof.

Penalty Notices

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the government disapplied certain statutory provisions on school attendance so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age would not be guilty of an offence on account of their child's failure to attend school regularly at the school at which the child is registered. This followed the decision of the government to close schools, colleges and nurseries in March 2020. From the start of the autumn term, however, pupil attendance at school is compulsory and the usual rules on school attendance apply once more. This includes the parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil and the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Parents can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority for their child's non-attendance. The penalty is £60 and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each Local Authority should publish a 'Code of Conduct' for Fixed Penalty Notices – under Wiltshire guidance a fine can be requested when a student has 10 unauthorised school sessions in a 6-month period. The School's headteacher decides if they wish to fine unauthorised absences from school by issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The headteacher then requests by a referral to the Local Authority to issue a fixed Penalty Notice on his or her behalf.

There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the Local Authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. Only the Local Authority can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs. Local authorities must conduct its investigations in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996. In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "regularly" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "sufficiently frequent attendance". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

There are 2 offences:

1. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 – If the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Any pupil whose attendance falls to or below 90% is defined as a Persistent Absentee. Student's absences will not be authorized for any child whose attendance is at or below 90%. Every absence must be supported by official documentation proving appointments, on-going illness/ medical conditions. Without such documentation, absences are recorded as unauthorised and will continue to be unauthorised until documentation has been received by the School AO. Students whose attendance are below 90% are met with their parents/carers by the School EWO, DOL or a member of SLT and, in exceptional circumstances where there are safeguarding concerns, home visits are normally carried out if the student has an unauthorised absence without a valid reason.

Such pupils will be brought to the attention of SLT and the EWO in the regular register checks. The EWO will inform the parent/carer of their child's status as a PA and inform them of the need for medical documentary proof. The AO will monitor the attendance over a six-week period or longer with letters, home visits and parental meetings and may have to request a fixed penalty notice from Wiltshire LA. The school will only accept up to two medical appointment cards when a student is being monitored for their attendance. If there is no improvement and/or documentary proof is still not forthcoming, the EWO and SLT will consult the Wiltshire EWS on the next step. This is likely to involve a further meeting at school with a Wiltshire Attendance Officer and either a school attendance contract put in place with an additional two/three week monitoring period or longer. The parent/carer may be asked to complete a GP consent form to allow the school and Wiltshire LA to contact their child's surgery for any medical evidence. If the pupil's unauthorised absence continues during this monitoring period the EWO and SLT will involve intervention and support from Wiltshire's Senior Attendance Lead for the stages of court/legal proceedings.

Reporting an Absence

Planned Absence

1. Send details of absence request to attendance@sjcs.org.uk

2. Attach any necessary evidence (photos of documents are fine).
3. Student must report to reception to be signed out.

Note: if the student did not bring in a copy of the appointment letter/card, we will phone a parent to confirm the appointment, even if there is a note in the planner. In exceptional cases, when we cannot get hold of a parent or carer, we may try to verify the appointment with the GP surgery/hospital so the student doesn't miss an appointment. If medical appointments have to be made in college time, they should be made as early or as late in the day as possible to allow the student to attend school before / after the appointment. Except for very rare occasions there is no need for any student to take a whole day off school for an appointment.

Unexpected Illness or Exceptional Event

1. The school must be notified **every day** the student is absent. You can do this by:
 - a. Our preferred method is by emailing attendance@sjcs.org.uk
or
 - b. phoning the school on 01722 335380
2. For an absence of 5 or more days parents/carers must supply the college with a doctor's note, copy of prescription or a stamped medical appointment card to show your child has been to see a health professional.

To request an Exceptional Leave of Absence

If you wish to request exceptional leave, then please submit a written request, via reception to Mrs Ridley, Headteacher. However, for a funeral abroad request, the school will need you to supply a death certificate when applying for exceptional leave of absence.

Please note: As of October 2013, Headteachers will be unable to grant any leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is linked to an amendment in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

St Joseph's Catholic School will adhere to the new amendments. If parents apply for exceptional leave of absence and the request is refused, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued if parents persist in taking the child out of school.

Please note that a Fixed Penalty Notice is served to each parent.

Monitoring Long Term Absence

1. In the event of an authorised long-term absence (e.g. hospitalisation), the Director of Learning and subject teachers will co-ordinate the sending of school work to the student.
2. In the event of unauthorised long-term absence, the Director of Learning and Attendance Officer should maintain contact with the parents and in consultation with the LA Education and Welfare

Team to discuss other strategies to support the student back into school. This may involve consulting with other agencies and personnel such as the AO, the LA, CAMHS, Mentors, YOT etc.

3. The school is committed to supporting parents and students who have difficulty in maintaining good attendance due to medical needs.

Punctuality

- Remember – persistent lateness counts towards a student's attendance record and affects whole class learning. The School records their late records from registrations to P6 lessons only for the purpose of late detentions.
- Students should register in their Tutor bases up to 9.15 am. If their tutor has closed the register the student must ensure they register themselves at the office.
- Students arriving after 09.15am must report to the office where their details are recorded. Students then proceed to the appropriate lesson.
- Students arriving late to school without a signed letter explaining the genuine reason (see below) from their Parent / Carer will be marked as 'unauthorised late' (L).
- Lateness with an accepted reason supported by the Parent / Carer will be authorised. Examples are: Medical/dental appointments, family problems or illness
- Any student arriving late for lessons without a signed note should be marked as late and must be given a sanction by the appropriate subject teacher.
- Only lateness which is validated for genuine, unforeseen circumstances by a letter or phone call from the parents will be authorised. Oversleeping or blaming the public transport as reasons will not be authorised.
- Punctuality is monitored by the Form Teacher, Director of Learning, SLT, AO, EWO.
- The Director of Learning will monitor lateness in conjunction with the Attendance Officer and should a pattern emerge for a student, parents will be informed and the student concerned may be requested to register earlier each day for a week or attend a detention. Parents may be asked to attend a meeting at school.
- If lateness continues the student concerned can be issued with a Friday after school detention. The member of SLT responsible for attendance will contact parents/carers and invite them to a meeting to discuss the issue further.
- All students are expected to arrive in school on time and the policy states the sanctions applied for students regularly late. Lateness with an accepted reason supported by a parent letter will be authorised. Examples are:
 - Medical/dental appointments
 - Known disruptive transport problems
 - Explained emergency family problems
 - illness

These are called authorised late absences and maybe recorded as such. If patterns of persistent lateness are demonstrated, parents may be invited to a meeting at school to discuss the patterns further.

Punctuality to Class

- All students should arrive to class on time.
- Once the class teacher has decided to begin the lesson, students arriving after that time are 'late' unless there is a note in the student planner from a staff member giving a reason for the lateness or a note on school register.
- The subject teacher should impose a sanction and record the lateness.
- If a pattern emerges the subject teacher should notify the Director of Learning

All students are expected to arrive at school on time and to arrive at each lesson on time.

Truancy Procedures

Any students found truanting from school will be issued with a sanction, often this will involve making up the missed time after school. We will, where learning has already been missed, endeavour to find a suitable sanction which does not further negatively impact learning or student progress.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Form Tutor

1. Registers must be called at the start of AM and PM registration sessions.
2. If a student is absent from the class but is known to be in school, the Attendance Officer should be informed immediately, and the pupil marked as absent. The Attendance Officer and Year Leader will then be informed. When and if the pupil arrives, they should be marked as 'L' (late).
3. Patterns of absence should be recorded, and the information passed to the Attendance Officer and Director of Learning.
4. When an initial pattern of non-attendance is brought to the attention of the Form Tutor the parents must be notified and a discussion had regarding the situation. This discussion will be recorded on SIMs.

Role of the Director of Learning

1. Only the Headteacher can decide an absence as unauthorised. If an absence is recorded as unauthorised the parents must be informed of the reason. Directors of Learning cannot authorise absences from school.
2. When a pattern of continued non-attendance is brought to the attention of the DOL the parent must be notified and will be invited to discuss the situation at a meeting.
3. The SL responsible for attendance, or other SLT member if he is unavailable, may decide that if a student is unwell s/he may need to go home after a member of the school first aid team has agreed. Students will only be allowed home if parents give permission.

Role of the Subject Teacher

1. Registers must be called at the beginning of each lesson.

2. If a student is absent from the class but is known to be in school, the Attendance Officer should be informed immediately, and the pupil marked as absent (N) and an email sent to all staff to raise awareness and assist with location of the student. The Attendance Officer and Year Leader will then be informed. When and if the pupil arrives, they should be marked as 'L' (late).
3. Patterns of absence should be recorded, and the information passed to the Attendance Officer and Year Leader.
4. Teachers must ensure all registers are taken accurately and promptly.
5. Any student not in class, may be in Pastoral and the teacher in R19 will register those in this room, adding a note to SIMS to reflect their attendance for that period in the Pastoral Classroom.

Role of the Attendance Officer

- E-mails and telephone calls from parents on the day of absence are logged and the information is recorded into the student's profile/events.
- Monitors all students' attendance and punctuality and daily absence/late texts are sent and followed up by telephone calls or letters.
- Notify parents at first sign of non-attendance issue arising.
- The school offices will maintain an "off-site" book in which students who leave site during the school day and will have the reason recorded. A note will be added to SIMS for records.
- Students may only leave site during the school day if:
 - there is a formal letter from the parent, or a medical appointment letter has been provided
 - the letter is accepted by the DOL or Senior Member of staff and signed
 - the student signs out at the office.
- The Attendance Officer may make additional appointments to see students with their parents who have either poor attendance or punctuality or both to meet at the annual parents' evenings for each year group.

Role of the Pastoral Classroom Supervisor

- The designated member of staff will register any students present in Pastoral during AM registration
- Teachers supervising the Pastoral Classroom will register in SIMS and record a note 'present in pastoral with...' which will update on the teacher's class register
- Where a student returns to a class from the Pastoral Classroom, the supervising teacher for the previous lesson notes on the record of attendees in the room which lesson the student has gone to; where there is a vulnerable student in Pastoral, their name is highlighted and the supervising teacher will note they have gone to the session recorded and will call to check on their arrival. If they have not arrived, reception and SLT are alerted to locate the student.

Targeted Intervention

First Day Challenge Procedure

The Gov.uk Website > School Attendance: Guidance for School (Updated: 07.01.21) states that schools should:

- carry out **robust first-day calling procedures** including priority routine for looked after children and vulnerable children, including those with a social worker or an EHCP
- work with families and the community **to identify which methods of communication work best, recognise potential barriers** in hard-to-reach families and find methods that work and are understood

The SJCS first Day Challenge policy, goes beyond both that required in Government legislation and its “Best Practice” strategy recommendations. It offers a clear, focused and robust first day calling procedures, and identifies and puts in place methods of communication which both recognise and overcome potential barriers relating to “hard to reach” families and ensures the safeguarding of all pupils.

Following the taking of AM registers by form tutors, any student who is absent without contact from a parent will be contacted via text message asking for communication as to reason for absence. Any parent who fails to respond to this will receive a phone call from the school to follow up.

Vulnerable pupils

To ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in our care a report is circulated internally each day by 10am notifying SENCO, Senior Leaders and the Safeguarding Team of the attendance of all vulnerable pupils and any reasons for their non-attendance so that follow up calls be made by the best placed person for that specific student.

Planned Attendance Interventions

Stage 1) When a student has missed 3 schooling sessions they will be sent a letter via SchoolsComm by the Attendance Officer to notify them of this.

Stage 2) If a student continues to accrue absences then their assigned form tutor will conduct a welfare check via a phone call home to discuss any potential barriers to attending school.

Stage 3) If a student becomes or approaches the persistent absentee threshold then parents will be contacted by the Director of Learning or Attendance Officer to discuss the school’s concerns. At this stage parents may be required to attend a school attendance meeting.

Stage 4) If a student presents significant attendance concerns then a member of the Pastoral Senior Leadership team will contact parents to discuss the school’s concerns. At this stage parents may be required to attend a school attendance meeting.

School Attendance Meetings

A school attendance meeting is a minuted meeting called specifically to address concerns regarding a student’s attendance. At this meeting actions will put in place for the school, parents and student. A review period will be agreed (minimum of 2 weeks) before a review is held. At the time of the review, if the student’s attendance has not improved the school may refer the case to the Wiltshire Educational Welfare for additional support.

Prosecution by local authorities

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs. Local authorities should consider the Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors in all prosecution cases.

Local Authorities must conduct all investigations in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Section 444 has two separate but linked offences: Section 444(1): where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly, and fails to ensure the child does so. Section 444ZA applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provisions.

There are statutory defences for parents to use under the 1996 Act.

The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the section 444 are as follows:

- a. Fine – up to £2,500.
- b. Conditional Discharge: This disposal lasts for a fixed period up-to 36 months. If you are found guilty of another offence (including returning to court if attendance difficulties persist) during the period of the conditional discharge you could be sentenced for the original offence.
- c. Community Orders: These could include unpaid work, a specified activity for the purpose of reparation, an accredited programme aimed at changing the offender's behaviour, prohibited activity, curfew and exclusion from entering a specified place for a period of time. There are several more options available to the court.
- d. Custodial Sentence: Parents prosecuted under Section 444(1a) could face a custodial sentence of up-to three (3) months imprisonment
- e. Please note you could be left with a Criminal Record which could affect any current and future employment.

Initiatives to Improve Attendance

St Joseph's is committed to supporting students to achieve high attendance and punctuality standards.

- A well-planned induction programme for students transferring from Year 6.
- Showing parents that unjustified absence will have a detrimental effect on students' learning.

- Students being regularly informed of their attendance progress with this to be tracked in their student planners weekly.
- Webpage set up on www.sjcs.org.uk for parents to provide information and FAQs reference attendance procedures and links to academic progress.
- Posters in all form rooms showing links between attendance and attainment.
- Posters in all form rooms encouraging healthy morning and bedtime routines to help with attendance and punctuality.
- Regular telephone attendance checks from the school.
- Contacting and meet with parents when patterns begin to emerge.
- Monitoring by the AO, DOL and SLT, possible legal/court proceedings in serious cases.
- EWO weekly monitoring meetings with Senior Lead for Attendance

Celebrating Good Attendance

It is important that good attendance is acknowledged, celebrated and rewarded. Achievement in attendance is as important as achievement in subjects and this should be embedded within the ethos of the College. St Joseph's is committed to rewarding those students who maintain outstanding attendance. These rewards include, but are not limited to:

- A live weekly TEAMS broadcast every Friday at the end of the day, whereby students are entered into raffles to win prizes (such as Amazon vouchers) for 100% attendance over a set period.
- Rewards (such as cinema experiences) for those students who show improvement in their attendance over a set period of time.
- Maintaining high attendance over the entire school year will earn students the right to buy a place on the end of Year Rewards trip (such as a day visit to Thorpe Park).

For the policy and procedures to be effective, it is important that all concerned play an active role and contribute to the partnership, i.e. parents, students and teachers. Hence there must be consistency in teacher approach. Form Tutors and Directors of Learning must take the responsibility for making enquiries and initiating action on attendance. In addition, attendance matters must be included in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for newly qualified teachers.

Consultation and Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. In school, staff will be engaged in discussion about the policy and its values. The views of parents, staff and governors regarding the content or operation of this policy should be submitted to the Head teacher.

All pupils and parents will be reminded of the need for exemplary attendance and the steps that will be taken to support pupils with low attendance or additional needs to access education.

The school will remind pupils that their needs as an individual will always be balanced against the common good and the welfare of the pupils and others in the school.