

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Our Mission Statement

We grow together in God's Love as we Pray, Learn and Play

*"Dyn ni'n tyfu gyda'n gilydd mewn cariad Duw wrth i ni weddio,
dysgu a chwarae"*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Article 1:

"you have the right to learn and go to school"

This Policy was approved by the Governing Body on	December 2020	The first policy was drawn up and ratified by the Governing Body	Signed: 
This policy is due to be reviewed by the Governing Body	February 2025	This Policy was reviewed by the Governing Body and ratified	Signed: 
This policy is due to be reviewed by the Governing Body	November 2025	This Policy was reviewed by the Governing Body and ratified	Signed:
This policy is due to be reviewed by the Governing Body		This Policy was reviewed by the Governing Body and ratified	Signed:

School Attendance Lead - Joanne Miller (CCHS)

School Attendance Clerk - TBC

Philosophy

We recognise that regular attendance is important since, without it, all the efforts of teachings coming to nothing. Children need to attend regularly if they are to enjoy the educational opportunities provided within the school and make progress. Absence can lead to educational disadvantage for a child and place them at risk of not achieving their full potential.

Our Mission is to educate the young people entrusted to our care in a Catholic, Christian way that ensures each one is valued and cared for and achieves the best of which he or she is capable.

The highest possible level of attendance is one of the most essential prerequisites for the successful growth of every child and of the school. Ensuring it occurs for every child is one of our principal priorities. The health and successful development of the school community also depends on all pupils' commitment to playing a full, constructive part and contributing to school life and work ethic. This can only be achieved with their fullest possible attendance. We aim to ensure each child is enabled to achieve and exceed his or her expected potential within and beyond the curriculum and so enabled to benefit from the highest possible quality teaching and learning.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. The school's attendance target, set by the Local Authority, is a rolling target with the aim of achieving 95% over the next 5 years. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy is written to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and in the understanding of life based on the Catholic faith. It is used in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Encouraging Good Attendance

We believe a positive attendance culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other.

Partners	Expectations
Pupils We expect that all pupils will :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend school every day • Arrive on time • Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school every day
Parents/Carers We expect that all parents/carers will :	Encourage their children to attend school every day and on time Ensure that they contact school as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school Ensure that their children arrive in school fully prepared for the school day Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers NOT arrange family holidays during the school term Inform the school, in confidence , about any problem which might affect their child's attendance or behaviour

<p>School Parents/carers can expect that the school will :</p>	<p>Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs Record their child's attendance regularly, accurately and efficiently Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence, when their child fails to attend school without good reason Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent Make all efforts to encourage and reward good attendance, punctuality and behaviour Instigate proper enquiries before removing a child from the school roll</p>
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Attendance Procedures and Reporting an Absence

- School gates are opened at 8.45am to start at 8.55am
- Arrival after 8.55am, without a valid reason, is classed as a **late** arrival. All late arrivals must enter school via the main office and sign in on the Halo System
- To report an absence, please call the dedicated Attendance Line on each day on 02920621625 before 9.00am and leave a voicemail
- If you fail to notify the school of your child's absence, we will contact you requesting a reason for their absence. You may, in addition, also be contacted via dojo, if no contact can be made by telephone. If we are unable to make contact or fail to hear from you for further information regarding your child's absence, a My Concern will be reported and marked as "Missing in Education"
- Arrival after 9.30am without a valid reason will be marked as an Unauthorised Absence

Sickness Absence During the School Day

- If a pupil becomes unwell during the school day, a call will be made home and parents/carers will be asked to collect the pupil. Once contact has been made, the child will wait in Reception for their parent/carer and must sign out via the Halo system before leaving the premises.
- If a pupil bumps their head during the school day, contact will always be made via the telephone or dojo to a parent. If the school feels the child needs to go home or seek medical attention, then the parent/carer will be asked to collect their child

Registration Procedures

- To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils are registered electronically via the School Information Management System (SIMS)
- Pupils are registered by 9.00am and then at 1.30pm
- The School Attendance Officer, upon investigating incidents of absence, use the following codes as set out by the Welsh Government:

B	Educated off-site
D	Dual registered
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit
J	Interview
W	Work experience
C	Other authorised circumstance
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
M	Medical appointment
S	Study leave
E	Excluded
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
O	Other unauthorised circumstance
G	Family holiday (unauthorised)
U	Late (after registration closed)

Where pupils are not required to attend school, the additional codes X, Y, Z and # may be used

Appointments

- We request that any appointments are known in advance, particularly those involving routine, non-emergency treatment. These can either be handed into the school office, sent via email to stjosephsprm@cardiff.gov.uk or sent via dojo to the School Attendance Officer. Wherever possible, appointments are to be arranged at times outside of the school day
- If there is no alternative and an appointment is made during the school day, an appointment letter or card must always be provided
- If an emergency appointment is made and no card or letter can be obtained prior to the appointment, please request one at the appointment and bring to the school office
- If pupils are leaving school early for their appointment, they must sign-out using the Halo system in Reception

Holiday Requests

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and any holidays during school term time will not be authorised. Families are therefore asked **not** to arrange holidays during term time. Term dates are communicated to parents/carers via the school's website.

If parents/carers do book a term time holiday then an Absence Request Form **MUST** be completed prior to the absence. This form is required even for a 1-day absence. Absence of over 4 weeks may result in your child being taken off roll.

Fixed Penalty Notices

In some circumstances, the school may request that the Educational Welfare Service issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013. A FPN will be requested:

- Where there is a minimum of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in an academic year (these do not need to be consecutive)
- Pupils persistently arriving after the close of the registration period ie. more than 10 sessions in an academic year (these do not need to be consecutive)
- A period of absence from school due to a holiday that was not authorised by school (a minimum of 10 sessions)
- A pupil has regularly come to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason and there have been 10 unauthorised absences
- Where attendance has been at 92% or below in the previous 12-month period

Improving Attendance

- The school has adopted the Cardiff County Council "Callio Attendance System" – see below
- The School Attendance Clerk meets regularly with the School Attendance Lead to highlight any regular absentees and low attendance pupils who the school have concerns about. Letters are then sent home to highlighted pupils
- The School Attendance Clerk will give high priority to supporting the improvement of attendance and reduction of persistent absence eg: by regularly reviewing data and reports provided by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and then will report back to Headteacher and Governors
- Teachers have a statutory obligation to mark the register regularly and accurately each time the register is opened and input the data onto the SIMS system
- The School Attendance Clerk keeps a daily telephone message book and records any messages of absence and highlights attendance percentage
- Absence Books are kept for each class and every morning the Teaching Assistants will check these books and if any absentees, will cross reference with the telephone message book. If no notification has been received, they will call parents to enquire why their child is absent from school and dojo messages will be sent if no answer is made by telephone

- A School Leaflet about the importance of good attendance has been produced and available to all pupils. Signs are also displayed outside the school office
- Any pupil requiring time away from school for medical appointments are asked to provide evidence to support their request. This is photocopied, scanned and kept in pupil files on the office secure “n” drive. This is also reported on SIMS
- The school will, wherever appropriate, provide additional support for a child returning to school after a long absence.
- The Headteacher and Governors will agree attendance and persistent absence targets for the year. The Governors will approve those targets.
- If necessary, EWO will work with the school to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance by offering strategies to the school and families.
- Persistent late arriving children are also discussed at attendance meetings and if necessary. A letter raising concerns and giving the parent/s an option to meet with the Headteacher may be sent out, if necessary.
- Any absence requests must follow the appropriate procedure by completing an Absence Request Form prior to the absence
- The School Attendance Officer will monitor days lost due to leave taken during term time. Fixed Penalty Notices and warning letters for un-authorized leave taken during term time are sent out to parents.
- The school will monitor the number and duration of fixed term exclusions for all children and regularly share this information with the School Attendance Lead and the Governors.

Callio Attendance System

This attendance campaign aims to give parents/carers more information about how attendance can impact on pupil achievement and keeps you updated regularly on your own child’s attendance.

Below is the Callio colour banding framework.

The rewards for good attendance are clear. Pupils are more likely to enjoy school, achieve better results and increased life chances.

Category	Attendance % at the end of the school year	Total number of days missed at the end of the school year
GREEN	100%	0
	97%	5
	96%	8
	95.5%	9
AMBER	95%	10
	93%	14
	92%	16
	91%	18
RED	90%	19
	87%	24
	85%	28
	80%	39

A 5 Step System of Attendance Management

Background

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are responsible for making sure that children receive efficient full-time education.

Regular school attendance is very important for all children and young people. Failure to attend school increases the risk of leaving school without qualifications and allows greater opportunity for young people to be drawn into crime and antisocial behaviour. It can also leave some young people vulnerable to harm by adults.

Absence from school can be caused by a wide range of factors. These present a significant challenge to the Local Authority and schools.

Learning and wellbeing are core elements in a young person's life. School attendance plays a key role in developing positive outcomes in this respect.

The best schools create a culture where pupils enjoy coming to school and feel that attendance is worthwhile. In these schools' lessons are a positive experience; pupils feel valued and make progress. Pupils returning from absences are welcomed and efforts are made to ensure that missed work is completed and understood. Parents value the school and comply with its attendance procedures willingly.

Estyn produced a paper "Improving Attendance" in 2006 which showed that attendance levels in Welsh Schools had not improved in 2003/04 and 2004/05. It highlighted the need for schools and the LEA to work in partnership and find collaborative ways in interacting directly with parents, to improve their attitudes to school attendance.

Estyn further identified good practice in schools, "which placed great importance on creating an environment that welcomes pupils and encourages them to attend... and where good links are established and maintained with families" (Estyn Improving Attendance 2006)

The National Audit Office in England produced an in-depth study into Improving School Attendance in England which looked at the connection between schools' circumstances and absence rates. It concluded that;

"Children who do not attend school regularly are much more likely to leave school with few or no qualifications, and they are more likely to be drawn into crime and antisocial behaviour."

The study further stated "Parents are responsible by law for ensuring that their children receive suitable full-time education."

The National Audit Office in England have identified through their work Effective Practices in Schools. This check list has been included as an exemplar of good practice which would also be applicable to schools in Wales.

These aspects of good practice in supporting attendance in schools link to the Welsh Assembly Government initiative School Effectiveness Framework which emphasises the need to, "maximise the learning of individuals in order to enrich their lives, extend their opportunities and significantly benefit the family and wider community" WAG 2008.

Further initiatives 14-19 Learning Pathways, The Child Poverty Implementation Plan 2006, The School Based Counselling Programme and the role of the Children and Young People's Partnership ensure the delivery of local services to children and young people, and provide the framework for multi-agency approaches to tackle absenteeism and non-attendance.

A framework for improving attendance is also highlighted in the WAG circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support section 4 - Attendance and in related aspects of whole school approaches to behaviour in section 3

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Effective Practice	Benefits
Clear policy on attendance that is communicated to all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pupils and parents know what is expected and why ■ Emphasises the link between attendance and attainment ■ Helps teachers to be consistent
School Attendance Officer supports attendance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff more willing and able to give high priority to attendance ■ Sufficient resources for initiatives to improve attendance
Electronic registration at each lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Used well, is efficient and provides reliable information, supporting monitoring and "first day calling" ■ Enables registration for each lesson, identification of lateness and post-registration truancy.
Collection and regular analysis of reliable attendance data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allows patterns to be identified, e.g. by year group, class, weekday or pupil ■ Helps identify pupils with problems who need support ■ If well communicated, helps reinforce the importance of good attendance
"First day calling" of parents of absent pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication to parents and pupils that absence is noted and needs explanation ■ Identifies cases where support may be needed
Reward schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage and recognise attendance ■ Increase the profile of attendance
Alternative curricula/extended opportunities programmes (in particular, more vocational education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stimulate interest of those pupils who are less likely to achieve if focused solely on academic qualifications
Instigation of legal sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Where other methods fail to work, parents and pupils know that legal sanctions may be used

The National Behaviour and Attendance Steering Group Report in 2008 and the subsequent action plan in 2009 set out how poor attendance can be tackled.

For Attendance the actions are set out with clear responsibilities for the Welsh Assembly Government, The Local Authority and Schools.

The Expectation is that:

The Welsh Assembly Government will:

- Revise attendance codes to ensure greater consistency and remove barriers to inclusive practices.
- Hard code attendance codes into software packages to ensure greater consistency of coding across Wales.
- Collaborate with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), schools and children and young people to produce an All-Wales Attendance Framework which would include revising current

attendance codes and producing guidance on monitoring and analysing absences with links to related initiatives such as the Forced Marriage Action Plan.

- Facilitate a seminar on the effective use of attendance data to inform practice.

Local authorities will:

- Collaboratively, in partnership with EWS, produce an All-Wales Attendance Framework to include: attendance codes and general guidance to their use, referral processes, multi-agency working, working with parents and children and young people and use of attendance data as management information.

Schools will:

- Work with both their school councils and all their children and young people to consider ways to improve attendance for the good practice section of the website.
- Work with the EWS to ensure more consistent referral processes for non-attendees.
- Be rigorous in collecting attendance data.
- Contribute to the All-Wales Attendance Framework.

With these expectations in mind, the LA in partnership with a group of local High Schools has been trialling the use of the new attendance codes.

A Maintained Schools Partnership Agreement has been developed which places an emphasis on Attendance.

In hand with this the LA and a group of High School and Primary School Head colleagues have developed the 5 Step Approach to Attendance Management.

THE 5 STEP APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

STEP 5: STATUTORY ACTION

- Implementation of statutory action within the guidelines of the 1996 Education Act

STEP 4: CASE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

- Individual case review
- Case conference
- Pre-Court meetings
- Formal letters
- Consideration of statutory action

STEP 3: EWS REFERRALS

- Individual pupil referrals based on attendance data and discussions with school attendance leaders
- Formal referral forms completed
- Letters sent to parents and services
- EWS Intervention

STEP 2: EWS ADVICE

- Cluster Attendance Officer to act in a consultative capacity to assist schools with alternative strategies
- Cluster Attendance Officer to support the school in looking at agency/service advice and action as appropriate

STEP 1: SCHOOL BASED INTERVENTIONS

- Where school attendance initiatives are made explicit to all pupils, staff and families
- School attendance policy and the review of attendance data form part of both the SDP and the Governors' meeting agenda

- STEP 1 School Based Intervention
- STEP 2 School Based in conjunction with advice from EWS
- STEP 3 Formal referral to EWS
- STEP 4 Case review and alternative strategies.
- STEP 5 Statutory Action

STEP 1 – School Based Action

It is appropriate for a senior member of staff to have overall responsibility of attendance matters. The school should consider how best their internal organisation and staffing deployment supports the identification, monitoring, reporting and prevention of attendance problems.

Initial school intervention should include:

- 1st day of absence parental contact by telephone, text or e-mail.
- Working together with parents and pupils to identify underlying causes of non-attendance, eg:
- Medical needs
- Bullying
- Social Problems
- Disaffection
- Lateness
- SEN

Developing and adopting in-school policies to identify underlying problems and where appropriate develop realistic strategies to address them.

STEP 2 – School-based in conjunction with advice from Cluster Attendance Officer

Where school-based interventions are still considered the appropriate level, Cluster Attendance Officer expertise and advice may be sought.

The Cluster Attendance Officer, working in a consultative capacity, will act to assist the school in identifying possible alternative strategies through liaison with the school's senior manager with responsibility for attendance.

At this level no formal referral is made. Though good practice would suggest that such consultations would result in a pupil's name being recorded in order to anticipate future intervention.

Where parents seek help from the Cluster Attendance Officer directly, Step1 intervention may be considered appropriate.

In order to move to Step 3 the appropriateness of a referral should be judged using the following criteria:

- Have all the school-based intervention strategies been adopted/considered?
The EWS would consider referral in the following cases in conjunction with information gained at Step 2.
- Block absences of more than 20 sessions without explanation.
- Irregular patterns of attendance with frequent unauthorised absences.
- Prolonged poor attendance pattern.
- Pupils with less than 80% attendance in a term period (HEC).
- Children at risk who exhibit poor or irregular attendance.
- Suspicious absences without medical corroboration.

- Known truants.
- School refusers.
- Absences connected with possible child safeguarding issues.
- Sudden deterioration in attendance without any specific reason and no explanation given.
- Pupils who are persistently late after close of registration

The following questions may be useful in considering whether a referral to the EWS is appropriate:

- Is the EWS the correct agency to undertake the task? – Is it, for example, a task for Children’s Services, Educational Psychologist, YOS, Careers Wales.
- Is the timing appropriate?
- What is the desired outcome of the intended referral?
- What will the impact be on others? - Parents/siblings.
- Is this a priority for the EWS or are there other agencies or strategies available?
- Have the parents been advised by the school that a referral could be made to the EWS?

All referrals should be made on the EWS Referral Form.

The referral form contains factual evidence and is essential for case management and review as well as providing statistical data to schools, governors and the LEA.

In addition, the following must be attached to the referral form.

- A copy of the pupil’s school attendance record
- Copies of letters and contact with parents - with date, time and outcome
- Copies of correspondence with other services/agencies
- In order to ensure the health and safety of the EWO any details of concern of known risk factors associated with the pupil and the pupil’s parents and family or the geographical location of the home must also be included

STEP 3 Formal Referral to the EWS

Each pupil will be considered on an individual basis and a referral will be based on a number of factors outlined in Step 2, and not solely of a set target figure of attendance.

School Staff are reminded that in order for legal action to be initiated at Step 5 absences must be recorded as unauthorised, as authorisation of an absence by the school constitutes a statutory defence to section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

At Step 3 EWS action may include:

- Home visit
- Writing to parents/carers
- Contacting parents/carers by telephone
- Emailing parents/carers
- Meeting with pupil in school with appropriate school staff
- Meeting with pupil and parents in school with appropriate school staff
- Support the school to draw up a contract between the school, EWS, parent and pupil

Where a referral is agreed between the school and the EWSO, the EWSO will make an initial assessment and determine a course of action.

Where a home visit is considered the appropriate intervention the EWSO will:

- Check the PACD database for any concerns
- Make a home visit within 5 school days of receipt of the referral.
- Provide a written response on process as part of the running referral record within 10 working days.

The purpose of the home visit will be to:

- Assess family circumstances.
- Inform parents of their obligations in respect of school attendance.
- Provide advice and support to families

STEP 4 Case Management Approach

Where there has been little or no progress in improving attendance of individual pupils following EWS interventions at Step 3, the case will be subjected to a review in conjunction with the SEWO and other interested agencies where appropriate.

Consideration will be given to a number of complementary strategies. These may include:

- Intensive monitoring of individual pupil's attendance.
- A time limited in-depth programme with the family.
- Referral to other agencies/services.
- Holding an Attendance Case Review.
- Formal letters.
- Pre-court meeting.
- Piloting an Intensive Approach to Improving Attendance Programme
- Consideration of Statutory Intervention – Step 5.

Step 4 will also: pilot case reviews on “casual admissions” in High Schools and monitor progress of these in partnership with the School Admissions Service.

: support the BST and Exclusions Officer in the admission of excluded pupils in school.

: Support the BST and school in the setting up and monitoring of Pastoral Support Plans.

If there is no significant progress at Step 4, and there has been no evidence that the parents and or pupil have responded to a range of interventions which have been recorded and monitored, then parents will be informed that they have reached Step 5 Statutory Action.

Step 5 – Statutory Action

Where there is a need to implement statutory action the EWS will act within the following criteria (see EWS prosecution protocol):

- Prior to implementing action under Sect. 444 the EWS is required to give consideration of the suitability of the case for placing before the Family Court with regard to an Education Supervision Order under sect. 36 of the Children Act 1989 (*see below*)
- Are the absences in the attendance register shown as unauthorised? (*Under Sect. 444(1) Education Act 1996 – a statutory defence is the authorisation of absences by the school*)
- Has consideration been given to all possible intervention?
- Have the parents co-operated with the school/LEA in supporting the pupil (*Parents who fail in this regard could be prosecuted under the aggravated offence Sect.444(1A) Education Act 1996 – where, if found guilty, the penalty is greater*)
- Are there any other circumstances that mitigate against prosecuting at this stage?

Where the above criteria have been met the EWO will present the case to their Senior EWO for consideration.

The Senior EWO responsible for legal matters will ensure that the following procedures are activated: **Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 (Failure to secure regular attendance of registered pupil)**

Where there is little or no improvement following the Pre-Court meeting the process will continue as detailed: -

- The EWO, in consultation with the Senior EWO will collate the following documentation for prosecution –
 - Head Teacher's Certificate of Attendance
 - Statement from the EWO and exhibits relevant to the case.
 - Information regarding previous prosecutions.
 - Supporting documentation, e.g. from other agencies

The Senior EWO responsible for legal matters will then progress the case with Legal Services.

Education Supervision Orders. S.36 The Children Act 1989

S.36 of the Children Act empowers the LEA to apply for an ESO. An ESO is a ‘family proceedings’ matter as defined by the Children’s Act 1989, which regards the welfare of the child as the main concern and is a civil matter.

Courts may not make an ESO when the child is in the care of the L.A.

An ESO will only be considered under the following circumstances: -

- Where parent/s and pupil/s are committed to improving attendance
- Where parent/s and pupil/s are prepared to work closely with the designated EWSO
- Where the child is of an age to benefit from an ESO.

For children not registered with a school they could be prosecuted under Section 443 Education Act 1996 (Failure to comply with school attendance order)

(This covers children not on the roll of any school or receiving education otherwise than in school)

- Established EWS intervention, i.e. letters, visits
- Series of notices relating to the School Attendance Order sent by EWS Head of Service to parents
- The School Attendance Order sent by 1st class post
- Statements prepared
- Procedure for prosecution is as above.

Support For Groups of Pupils At Particular Risk

Certain pupils have the potential to pose a particular risk in terms of attendance and may need additional support to ensure regular attendance.

The EWS may be able to provide additional advice and support in such cases.

These groups include:

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs
- Children in the care of the Local Authority. (All absences authorised and unauthorised should be monitored and reported to the EWS)
- Young carers
- Children from ethnic and cultural minorities.
- Asylum seeker families
- Pupils from families experiencing Domestic Violence.
- Children with health problems
- Teenage mothers.
- Children from families under stress.
- Children and young people facing emotional and psychological difficulties.
- Young carers

SUPPORT MATERIALS

School Audit

Toolkit and Good Practice Guide

Maintained School Partnership Agreement

Service Level Agreement

Prosecution Protocol

Further Reading

Children Missing from Education Guidance Cardiff LEA

Extended Holidays Cardiff LEA

WAG circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support

WAG circular 006/2010 statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education.