



# St Joseph's Cluster

## Attendance Policy/ Polisi Presenoldeb

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body July 2022 and is due for review July 2023



The St Joseph's RC High School Cluster Attendance Policy has been agreed by all schools and Governing Bodies within the cluster.

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### **Our shared principles**

- Every child has a fundamental right to be educated, to flourish personally and to achieve their very best academic results, these are secure with high levels of attendance.
- By law all children of compulsory age must receive a proper full-time education.
- Parents/Carers and teachers have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.
- Our cluster expect every student and Parent/Carer to aim for 100% attendance in each academic term and year.

### **Our shared aims**

- To foster and ensure maximum pupil attendance in every class and every year group in every term.
- To encourage students to take full advantage of their educational opportunity by attending regularly.
- To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and work in partnership with parents/Carers and the EWO to address difficulties.

### **Our shared objectives:**

- To identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties.
- To eliminate unauthorised absences.
- To provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance.
- To praise high levels of attendance and improvement in attendance every term.

### **The wider aims of our cluster attendance policy are to:**

- Share the message of the importance for excellent attendance and punctuality with children, young people and their families.
- Support families with individual needs to improve attendance and their access to education.
- Work effectively with our partners to maximise levels of attendance.
- Raise levels of attainment and achievement at school through high expectations of excellent attendance and punctuality.



The St Joseph's cluster aim to ensure that the provision outlined in the Attendance Policy considers the varied individual needs and expectations of all stakeholders. We aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to this provision regardless of race, ethnic origin, language, gender, disability, age, sexuality, nationality, religious or non-religious belief, family background or any other individual characteristics. We aim to ensure that all stakeholders also share these values.

Excellent and regular attendance at school is essential if students are to succeed and fulfil their potential. To ensure this, the St Joseph's cluster employs a whole school approach toward attendance with class teachers, Form Tutors, Pastoral teams, School support/attendance officer, designated leadership and the Educational Welfare Officer all fully involved in monitoring student attendance.

Excellent attendance is given a high profile throughout all schools and we all aim to ensure that the students in our school attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

### **What Parents/Carers can expect from each school**

- All cluster School Attendance Policy which has been approved, is reviewed regularly by the Governing Bodies and is available to parents/carers on the school website (and/or the school office)
- Clear advice and guidance relating to the policy and procedures including the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- A positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students and parents feel safe, secure and valued.
- A motivating, relevant and accessible curriculum for all students.
- A high priority of attendance and punctuality monitoring.
- Regular and efficient recording of attendance; twice daily.
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend school without good reason.
- Early contact on any notified problems.
- Efficient and effective communication between home and school

### **What pupils/students can expect from school**

- A safe learning environment in which students feel valued and secure.
- Consistently applied rewards and recognition for excellent and improving attendance.
- Support when experiencing any difficulties.
- Contact with home when feeling unwell.
- Home visits from the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO), School meetings, letters, and telephone calls with Parent/carers regarding attendance issues.



## **What the Cluster can expect from Newport City Council Education Welfare Service**

- Provide support to schools, pupils and parents/carers to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism.
- Liaise with multi-agencies, in order to assist with providing important links between home and school and will work in partnership, so that that pupils will benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.
- Provide statutory support in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices, Cases for Magistrates Court proceedings and supervisory function for Education Supervision Orders.
- Swift follow up on CME (Children Missing Education) referrals

## **Attendance Policy Guidance and Procedures**

The oversight of attendance will be the responsibility of the designated school leader in each school with the whole school responsibility for Attendance. Support will be given by the School Support/Attendance officer who will act as coordinator of the SIMS system.

### **Specific responsibilities include:**

Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality is the shared responsibility of our schools, parents, carers, students, cluster staff and our cluster partners.

### **Our Cluster can expect all schools to:**

- Use the Cluster Schools Attendance Policy- to guide attendance tracking and monitoring and investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance including challenging parents about regular or intermittent illness absence
- Keep parent/carers informed of any attendance related issues
- Register pupils accurately and keep up to date records
- Complete accurate and timely CME (Child Missing Education) referrals
- Use a wide range of attendance support strategies and have a robust system of keeping accurate records of all contacts and actions taken.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibilities:**

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. Absences should only be for genuine illness or in exceptional circumstances.
- To ensure their children attend school punctually.
- To provide school with their current and at least two emergency telephone number(s), an email address for school records and keep school updated on any changes.
- To inform schools on the first day of their child's absence.
- To take holidays during the school holiday periods; any leave of absence during term time must be applied for in advance.



### **In the case of absence our Parents/Carers will:**

- Contact school via telephone (**01633 653110**) to notify of absence
- Arrange medical appointments outside of school time whenever possible
- Arrange family holidays during the school holidays
- Contact the School Support/Attendance Officer to report any attendance concerns

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- To aim each year for 100% attendance and to attend school regularly.
- To arrive at school on time and follow school procedures for registration.
- To arrive at school in the correct uniform and equipped for learning.
- To seek support in school regarding any barriers to attendance, attainment and achievement.

### **Our primary class teachers and secondary form tutors will:**

- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance
- Monitor attendance of their class/tutor group daily and ensure SIMS attendance records are updated.
- Collect information from students regarding any absence
- Meet with Parents/Carers as appropriate
- Use previous attendance figures to negotiate termly attendance targets with each member of the class/tutor group
- Support students in achieving attendance targets
- Follow up attendance and punctuality concerns, robustly

### **High school subject teachers will:**

- Liaise with Heads of Year about students whose learning is being negatively affected by repeated lateness or absence
- Raise the profile and importance of excellent attendance

### **High school setting Heads of Year with the support of the Attendance Officer will:**

- Monitor attendance weekly
- Monitor the lateness of students who are late on a daily and weekly basis
- Follow up on all students who have been absent for 3 days or more through home contacts
- Follow up with parents' students who are repeatedly late
- Meet the Educational Welfare Officer on a regular basis.
- (As designated by NCC)
- Discuss attendance issues with Form Tutors at weekly briefing sessions and team meetings
- Distribute rewards for attendance and ensure attendance receives a high profile in assemblies and through displays
- Co-ordinate work for long-term absentees



- Target a 'spotlight group' of students whose attendance can be improved and work with these students
- Use attendance rewards to improve attendance
- Arrange for the production and distribution of attendance certificates termly
- Meet with parents as appropriate
- Provide a regular report on attendance in year groups for the designated senior lead.

#### **Our School Support /Attendance Officers will:**

- Monitor the SIMS system, and report concerns and faults to the relevant class teachers and school leaders.
- Contact all students on first day of absence by telephone/text message or letter
- Refer students who have been absent for 3 days with no response to the Head of Year or designated school lead.
- Update attendance data daily with parental returns/holiday forms/manual registers
- Produce registers and statistics fortnightly, monthly for the school lead and Pastoral team.
- Send text messages/emails to Parents/carers of students who arrive late.

#### **The designed senior lead/In High school this is an Assistant Headteacher will:**

- Ensure that all key staff are aware of whole school and year group attendance targets and progress on achieving these
- Produce summary documents for Governors and the Headteacher
- Ensure parents, staff and students are made aware of changes to attendance recording or reporting
- Monitor attendance weekly
- Negotiate annual attendance targets based on previous attendance figures
- Liaise with Heads of Year and the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure resources are used effectively and students monitored appropriately
- Meet with parents as appropriate
- Ensure attendance is discussed in fortnightly meetings between all Heads of Year and line managers
- Raise the profile of, and reward, good attendance on a regular basis
- Review persistent unauthorised absences, issue warning letters and liaise with the Local Authority over the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices

#### **Our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will:**

- Liaise with the School Support Officer about daily contacts
- Meet with Heads of Year regularly to discuss attendance issues
- Prosecute parents where all other avenues have failed
- Visit parents of students who have unsatisfactory attendance and devise suitable home-school agreements for their reintegration to school
- Visit parents as requested by the designated school leader.



### Absence from school:

All schools will use the correct authorised and unauthorised codes, set out by the Welsh Government 2010. Authorisation of absence is only at the discretion of the individual Head Teacher.

**Authorised absence:** An absence is deemed authorised when the school accepts that there is good reason for the absence and communication from the parent has been received.

**Unauthorised absence:** An absence is deemed unauthorised when there is; no communication from the parent/carer, exceptional leave has been requested but declined, leave of absence has been taken without prior request, the child has higher than average illness, where no medical proof (appointment card, prescription etc.) has been provided or is a persistent absentee where an attendance plan may be in place.

### Absence Codes:

B - Educated off-site	Approved Educational Activity
C - Other authorised circumstance	Authorised Absence
D - Dual-registered	Approved Educational Activity
E - Excluded	Authorised Absence
F - Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G - Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H - Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I - Illness	Authorised Absence
J - Interview	Approved Educational Activity
L - Late (before registers close)	Present
M - Medical appointment	Authorised absence
N - No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O - Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence
P - Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
R - Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S - Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T - Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U - Late after registers close	Unauthorised Absence
V - Educational Visit or Trip	Approved Educational Activity
W - Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
Y - Partial or enforced closure	Attendance not required
X - Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required
# - School closed to all pupils	Attendance
Z - Pupils not on role	Attendance not required



### **Registration:**

- All schools have their own individual registration times.
- In High school, registers will be taken in each lesson every day.
- A child arriving late and before the registers are closed will receive an 'L' mark.
- Any child arriving after the registers have closed will received the 'U' code, which will be followed up by school as with all other unauthorised absences.

### **Procedure for Absence Concerns:**

- Mark register with the appropriate code.
- School to initiate first day response to Parent/carer via text or email. If the pupil is regarded as particularly vulnerable, then a phone call will also be made.
- When the absence remains a concern, school will make further contact with home via phone and email.
- If required, also send written correspondence (Letter 1) and/or, invite the parent for a school meeting.
- School to action further correspondence (letter 2), should there be insufficient improvement with the attendance.
- All on-going absence concerns, must be reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- As attendance improves, school will continue to monitor.
- Action a referral to EWS for the following reasons:
  - On-going concerns.
  - No response or poor response from the parent.
  - Parent fails to fully engage.
- School must continue to keep the EWO regularly update with all absence concerns.

### **Medical Appointments:**

All schools will code absences 'M' as medical if sufficient evidence has been provided by the parent/carer.

Our cluster reserves the right to trust what our parent/carers tell us, but for extended medical absence or if there is any doubt about absence then an appointment card or letter will be requested.

### **Entertainment Licenses:**

Schools will only consider granting leave of absence for pupils who are in possession of an up to date Entertainment / Performance License.



## **Leave of absence in term time**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations, make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. Leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher/attendance lead and the Governing Body. For the leave of absence to be authorised, all of the following criteria must be met:

- The child is of statutory school age (5 years and above)
- The child's average level of attendance across the rolling 12 months prior to the date of requested leave is 95% or above
- The child is always punctual to school
- The child's attendance record for the current academic year shows no unexplained or unauthorised absences
- The requested leave does not fall within the assessment/examination period for the year group

## **Holiday requests**

In accordance with Newport Local Authority guidance, absence due to family holidays will be considered by each school in the cluster against the criteria which may be found in the request for leave forms. The Cluster takes a consistent approach however and never authorises any holiday in term-time, indeed FPN's are issued if a highly significant number of days are taken for holiday.

## **Fixed Penalty Notices**

**\*Each school in the cluster will take its own stance on the issue of FPN's in accordance with their context and understanding if the best way to tackle absence from school.** Therefore, the decision around the issue of an FPN rests with each designated leader in each individual school.

## **For those schools in the cluster using FPN's, these may be considered appropriate when:**

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence during the current term. These do not need to be consecutive:
- Unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to holidays in term time or delayed return from extended holidays; or
- Persistent late arrive at school, i.e., after the register has closed, in the current term. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival
- Truancy, where the child has come to the attention of the Police or public during school hours for being absent from school, without an acceptable reason.
- Fixed Penalty notices are currently set at £60 and must be paid within 28 days. Non-payment within this timeframe results in a total Penalty of £120. Non-payment of fines will result in prosecution.



### **Child Missing Education (CME)**

- If the child fails to return to school on the agreed date, the school must take action and consider following the Child Missing in Education process.
- When a child's absence is unexplained, schools will contact the parents on the first day of absence and endeavour to continue to make contact throughout the day until they can speak with the parent/carer.
- If the absence remains unexplained, the school must take steps to establish the child's safety and whereabouts.
- All reasonable enquires with emergency contacts, friends in school and neighbours should be made before a CME referral to the Local Authority is completed.
- The CME referral should be made to the Local Authority after enquiries have proved unsuccessful.
- If a child moves out of the Newport City Council Authority, not attending school and school are unable to locate the child / family, a CME referral to the Local Authority must be actioned.

### **Admissions and deletions from school roll:**

- Schools are required to inform the Local Authority in every circumstance when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admissions register.
- This would include informing the Local Authority of the pupil's name, address, parents' name(s), parents email address and contact telephone numbers, expected new destination and proposed new school name / Local Authority, within 5 days of the pupil leaving their school.

### **Re-integration**

The school has arrangements to reintegrate students who have been absent for extended periods. In such cases each student will be treated individually, and arrangements will be made that are most appropriate to the individual's circumstances. All reintegration plans are formalised by the designated school leader for attendance in conjunction with supporting staff.