



# **Attendance Policy**

## **The Federation of St Edmund's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary Schools**

**Policy Adopted: Spring 2015  
Reviewed: Spring 2024  
Review Date: Spring 2026**

**Federation Mission Statement:  
Learning Together in God's Love by encouraging and supporting  
one another.**

## **ST EDMUND'S AND ST JOSEPH'S FEDERATION**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

#### **AIM**

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

There are clear links between attendance and attainment and attendance and safeguarding children therefore the whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: governors, parents, pupils and all school staff.

This policy is based on guidance from:

1. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2013)
2. Education Act 2011
3. DFE Guidance 2022: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
4. Implementation of Penalty notices to tackle non school attendance – Penalty Notice Protocol (20 22)

This policy will be reviewed annually.

#### **PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”

(NB: Where the Education Act refers to “he”, it also means “she”)

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. Ideally this should be by telephone 01284 755141 (St Edmund's) 01787 373365 (St Joseph's) option 1 on the first day of absence. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. In term time absence for holiday will not be authorised. Absence immediately before or after a school holiday unless supported by medical evidence will not be authorised.

Attached is a Guide for Parents which may help to answer some important questions.

## **PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties which might prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their classteacher or another adult.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school an explanation for absence should be provided by their parent/carer via phone, email or letter. Parents and Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

All the staff at the federation schools will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality as part of wider expectations of behaviour and relationships as outlined in the federations Behaviour and Relationships policy. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:

- ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the headteacher can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence); if in doubt refer to headteacher;
- pupils may be marked as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances if they are unable to get to school because of serious disruption to travel caused by a weather related emergency (snow or flooding);
- responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- contacting parents on the first day of absence if no reason has been given and recording the contact;\*
- consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern; #
- promoting regular school attendance (for example by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school) \*
- awareness of regular or patterns of absence and referring to office for investigation
- providing parents with a termly attendance certificate
- providing Headteacher/Head of school with attendance data weekly for monitoring
- monitoring of identified pupils' attendance daily

**Where a pupil's attendance falls below 95% the headteacher/ head of school will communicate with the pupil's parents. This will enable support to be put in place to improve attendance. This could involve pastoral support through the THRIVE programme, additional academic support and advice from the SENDco and advice or referral from external agencies e.g. EWO, SES, Emotional and Mental Health Hub.**

## Penalty Notices

The head reserves the right to issue a penalty notice

- where there are concerns around attendance and a pupil has missed at least 6 sessions (3 days), due to unauthorised absence in a school term
- Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

### Further action

- any further unauthorised leave of absence taken in an academic year after a Penalty Notice has been issued could result in a direct referral to the Local Authority to consider legal action in the Magistrates Court under Single Justice Procedure

### Children missing in Education

School staff must ensure that they are aware of the procedure to follow when a child goes missing from education. Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

A Guide for School Staff is attached.

#### *Key:*

# = Responsibility of the Head teacher

\* = Office Staff

## **REVIEWING THE POLICY**

The school will review this policy annually.

Approved at .....

Dated .....

Signed .....  
(Chair of Governors)

Signed .....  
(Headteacher)

## **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

1. ***When does my child need to be in school?***

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and the afternoon register at **1.05 pm**.

2. ***What happens if my child is late?***

Registration finishes at **9.15 am** in the morning and **1.15 pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between 8.55 am and 9.15 he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after 9.15 he/she will be marked as **absent**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should be brought to the School Office by a responsible adult who will sign the pupil in via the electronic system. If a pupil is late on several occasions, parents will be contacted to discuss reasons/difficulties for lateness.

3. ***Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?***

We would expect a parent to telephone, email or send a letter to the school on the first day of absence. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence and this will be shown on your child's attendance certificate.

4. ***If I send a letter, email or phone will this mean absence is authorised?***

For absent pupils of compulsory school age, the register must record whether or not their absences are authorised. If no acceptable reason for the absence has been received at the time of registration, the absence is **unauthorised** unless or until a satisfactory reason is given. A note or explanation from a pupil's home **does not** mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence rests with the school.**

5. ***What reasons will the school accept for absences?***

- Illness
- Day of religious observance
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (*please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays*)
- Family bereavement
- Difficulties caused by travel due to severe disruption from weather.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

6. ***What is unacceptable?***

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

7. ***Will the school contact me if my child is absent?***

The school will phone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.30am. If your child is absent for more than two days we will contact you again if we have not heard from you on the third day of absence. This is because it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

8. ***Can we take family holidays during term time?***

Holidays during term time **will not** be authorised. You must write to the headteacher in advance if you wish to take your child on holiday during term time. This will enable the school to discuss the request with you and seek an alternative arrangement. If annual leave is governed by employment conditions eg armed forces, emergency services, a letter from the employer is required. In these circumstances it is expected that leave will be rotated so that it does not occur in term time every year.

9. ***I am thinking about taking my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?***

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the headteacher/ head of school as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

10. ***What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?***

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning and eats a healthy breakfast. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

11. ***My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?***

Contact your child's classteacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

OM Health and Well-being provide confidential support for parents to discuss concerns about their child. An appointment can be made via the school office.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Welfare Service is based at:

**Western Area Education Office**, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds,  
Suffolk IP33 1RX Tel: 01284 758641

## A GUIDE FOR STAFF

### REGISTRATION

#### *Registers:*

- Classteachers are responsible for attendance registers using SIMS teacher app (teachers will only need to use the present / or absent N codes (late arrivals will be picked up by signing in system).
- Registers will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and **1.05 pm** KS1/**1.20pm** KS2 by the classteacher.
- Registers will close at **9.15 am** and **1.15/1.30 pm**.
- If a pupil fails to arrive while the register is being called (or after school gates are closed), he/she will be marked absent (N).
- Pupils who arrive late, but before the close of registration will sign in the electronic system at the office which will record the time of arrival and record them as late or with unauthorised absence (late after register close)

#### *Who will amend the register?*

- After checking details on the electronic pupil sign in system and amending where necessary all late arrivals will be imported on to the registration system with the appropriate marks
- Admin staff will use the attached register codes to amend reasons for absence where necessary (eg Medical, Unauthorised holiday, etc)

#### *Monitoring Procedures:*

- Head teacher will monitor attendance weekly and report to governors termly.
- Admin staff will monitor attendance daily
- Admin staff will provide monitoring report including reasons for absence each week.
- Class teacher must bring concerns regarding attendance or lateness to the attention of the Head teacher immediately.
- Attendance certificates will be provided to parents as part of the Learning Conversations each term.

#### *Authorised/Unauthorised:*

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:

- illness
- emergency dental/medical appointments
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- the pupil is not within walking distance and no suitable travel arrangements have been made by the LEA

- attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit
- participation in an approved public performance
- the pupil's parents are Travellers and the pupil is engaged in his/her parents' work.

It will remain unauthorised:

- if no explanation is received from parents
- for looking after siblings
- for shopping trips
- for unexceptional special occasions, eg birthdays
- for family holidays.

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence, they should consult with the Head teacher

### ***Following Up Absences:***

- A school response is essential if there is no contact from the parent.
- In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received the headteacher/ head of school should be informed and contact will be made with the parent.

### ***Strategies Employed to Support Pupils and Parents;***

- Copies of all calls, emails and letters must be kept on file.
- If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the classteacher will speak to the pupil's parents about their pattern of absences.
- If there is no significant improvement, the Head teacher will contact the parents and invite them into school to discuss attendance.
- Once point 3 is reached, the Education Welfare Officer should receive copies of all previous attempts made. This will be done through the Head teacher.

### ***Support For Pupils Who Have Difficulties Attending School:***

- Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example, because of exclusion or long-term illness) the class teacher will co-ordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure feedback on a regular basis.
- When pupils have been absent for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised, they will be welcomed back to school and supported by teachers to ease them back into the work they may have missed.

## REGISTER CODES

### PRESENT

Black oblique / am \ pm

### ABSENT

#### **Authorised:**

Educated off site	B
Other circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performances, other approved absences not covered by other codes)	C
Dual Registration (ie pupil attending another establishment)	D
Excluded	E
Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	I
Interview	J
Late (before registers close)	L
Medical/Dental appointments	M
No reason yet provided for absence	N

<b>Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other cod/description)</b>	<b>O</b>
Approved sporting activity	P
Religious Observance	R
Study Leave	S
Traveller absence	T
Late (after register closed)	U
Educational visit or trip	V
Work Experience	W
No-compulsory school age absence	X
Enforced closure	Y
Pupil not yet on roll	Z
School closed to pupils	#

Full guidance on codes for schools and LEAs from the DfES is available to read in the school office.