



St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Jesus Christ is our family role model

Opening our hearts and minds to dream the impossible and achieve beyond our wildest imagination

Everybody is valued and respected

Young and old will journey together to build God's Kingdom.

Striving for academic excellence and celebrating success in all we do

Approved by Governors:

Date for Review: Autumn 2019

St Joseph's RC School recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, therefore, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance (190 days per year) for individual students within the school. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent attendance.

In order to achieve this, all members of our school community have an important contribution to make.

1 Aims

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at St Joseph's.
- Reduce the number of persistent absentees (below 90% attendance is classed nationally as persistently absent from school).
- Raise the profile of attendance amongst the school community.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance for parents/carers, students and staff.
- Develop and monitor clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registers.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon data.
- Develop a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.

2 Policy

- The Attendance Strategy (Appendix 1) outlines strategies to be used to improve attendance. All staff should ensure that these are followed.
- An appropriate curriculum is essential and will be kept under constant review.
- The need for high quality learning and teaching throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of good attendance.
- Students are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection with school. This includes multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Students with additional Learning Needs are identified and given support.
- Effective partnerships with parents/carers through regular contact and support is provided; parents/carers are kept informed of students' attendance through first day contact, **epraise, interim reports** and through individual interviews as appropriate.
- Parents/carers are actively discouraged from taking students away from school during term time for holidays and other purposes.
- A comprehensive system of rewards for good attendance is used. (see Behavior Policy - Rewards and Sanctions).
- Attendance is given a high profile through displays, assemblies, newsletters and **social media**.

3 Identifying and Tackling Poor Attendance

- Attendance levels and patterns for individuals, form groups, year groups and the whole school are carefully monitored and action taken to address poor attendance at each level via Form Tutor's/**Head of Year/Pastoral Support Managers**.
 - Long term absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school.
 - Early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work prior to transition.
 - Appropriate strategies are put in place to support students and parents where appropriate.
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4 Responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly reviewed.
- Interventions are put in place to reduce absenteeism.
- Contact parents/carers if we have not heard from them regarding absence.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.
- Copy up any work missed from time off school.

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure good attendance (96% and above).
- Support School with interventions to promote positive attendance.
- Seek medical advice if 'illness' persists.
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reasons.
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time.
- Send in a note to the Form Tutor to explain the reason for absence.

Form Tutors:

- Form Tutors have the responsibility of registering students attendance at the beginning of the morning session. (If SIMS is not working, tutors must complete a paper version and send down to the main office).
- Form Tutors will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- Form Tutors have a major role to play in encouraging students to be punctual and to attend school each day and recognising patterns of absenteeism. *"As they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating". P5- Keeping Children Safe in Education- Sept 2018.*
- Absence notes from parents/carers will be checked by Form Tutors for their authenticity and will be filed.

Head of Year/Pastoral Support Managers:

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately.
 - Will ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place.
 - Are responsible for notifying parents/carers of unauthorised absences on those occasions when a student has been absent for three days when no reason has been received from the parents/carers.
 - Are responsible for discussing with Form Tutors problems relating to student attendance.
 - Conduct parental meetings in person or via the telephone to address the attendance issue of the child and strategies to improve.
 - Complete home visits to support positive attendance and to break down barriers.
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5 School Day:

- The school day for students begins at 8.25am with the 'Warning Bell' — by this time all students should be on the school's premises and make their way to form.
- At 8.30am when the "Registration Bell" is sounded students should be in form/assembly with form tutors.
- Students entering the school premises after the "Registration Bell" are late for school. These students **MUST** report to the School Reception where they must sign in and give a reason for their late arrival.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 12.00pm during Period 4 with class teacher.
- The school day ends at 2.45pm

6 Attendance procedures:

- Parents/carers are asked to telephone school at their earliest convenience to notify us of a child's absence. Failure to comply will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parents/carers explaining the reason for the absence.
- Students who need to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter/phone call from their parents/carers notifying the Form Tutor/Office/Pastoral Team for the reason who should record this on SIMS at the beginning of the school day.
- Parents who need their child to leave the school premises during the school day and make their own way alone to an appointment **MUST** phone school to acknowledge this to reinforce truancy and safeguarding procedures. Without speaking to a parent, no child will be allowed off school premises.
- Students **MUST** sign out at the main school reception when leaving the premises.
- Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School will endeavour to contact them or record as unauthorised absence.

7 Unauthorised Absences: (See Appendix 2- Penalty Notice Letter - Bolton Council - July 2018)

- An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:
 - School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent.
 - School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence.
 - Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming.
 - No explanation of absence is received within two weeks.
 - The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
 - Parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice as part of the Attendance Strategy (Appendix 1) processed once their child has had 10 sessions of absence - (2 sessions per day, morning and afternoon registration, therefore 5 days absent from school, per 2 half terms).
 - After 10 sessions of absence each parent/carer will receive a Warning Notice informing them that their child must have no more unauthorised absences. If there is no improvement in attendance and/or punctuality (after the register has closed) it could lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.
 - Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.
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8 Holidays in Term Time

The Government has amended key legislation which came into force with effect from 1 September 2013 relating specifically to the authorisation of leave during term time. This decision has been made to encourage schools to take a firmer stance on unnecessary absence and to dispel the myth held by many parents/carers that there is an entitlement to take time off for holidays in term time.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence. We ask all parents/carers not to book holidays during term time. Any savings that parents/carers may make by taking holidays in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

If a child is absent from school for a holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we are obliged to pass this information on to the Early Intervention Service which may result in a penalty notice being issued. (See Appendix 2).

We hope you will acknowledge and understand the limitations placed on schools in granting any leave in term time. Therefore, we look forward to receiving your support as we continue to maintain the high standards of attendance at St Joseph's.

9 Religious Observance in Term Time

The school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance, but the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body.

The school may only allow one day of authorised absence under these circumstances. All requests for leave due to religious observance must be made in advance and in writing to the Headteacher - Mr T McCabe.

10 Emergency closure, eg, snow days/pandemic

- It is extremely rare for the school to shut for emergencies such as snow. If in doubt parents/carers are advised to tune into Tower FM (107.4 FM), Bolton FM (96.5 FM) or log onto the school's website: www.stjosephsbolton.org.uk or Facebook page.
- Parents/carers are asked not to telephone the school. If parents/carers have not heard otherwise we will expect all students to be in school.
- If school needs to close during the school day then the Procedures during Inclement Weather/Adverse Circumstances will be activated. (see pupil diary).

11 Internal Absence from Lessons

Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without the permission from a Head of Year/SLT and accompanying phone call from a parent/carer. It is possible that on some occasions a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of a member of staff.

- If a child does not arrive at their lesson, the class teacher should immediately email/phone the pastoral floor/school office for clarification.
 - The pastoral support/office staff must then check if the child has been sent to First Aid and check Reception to see if they have signed out and left the school site officially.
 - If they have not signed out officially and are believed to be still on the premises, the available staff should search the school site.
 - If the child is not found within a short period of time, the parents/carers should be contacted by the pastoral/office staff/Head of Year/SLT.
 - In extreme cases The Local Authority will be notified by the Headteacher that a child is missing.
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- If a member of staff finds the child the Headteacher must be told at once. Parents/carers, police and other authorities will be notified.

12 Children who run

- If a child runs away from school and is in the eye line of adults, the adult should call after the child or try and talk to the child to try and get them to come back. Under no circumstances should a member of staff physically restrain or grab the child, unless the child is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or putting themselves in a dangerous situation e.g. running onto the road.
- A member of staff should never put themselves at risk in the process and should not attempt to intervene without assistance unless it is an obvious emergency.
- The member of staff should inform the pastoral/office staff /SLT who will contact parents/carers.
- The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare happening. These procedures are designed to put into place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents/carers and the authorities at every appropriate point.

13 Attendance – Parental/Carer Guidance

Why regular attendance is important:

Students who fail to attend regularly experience educational and social disadvantage at school and their future life prospects can be impaired. They can also be at risk of drifting into antisocial and criminal behaviour. Student absence can also disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same learning environment.

To ensure your child reaches his/her full potential it is very important that you make sure your child attends regularly and punctually.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved through close communication between the school, the parent and the child. Once we know that your child is having problems, we will try to resolve them.

What is good attendance?

95% attendance is seen as a good level of attendance. If your child has an attendance rate below 95% please ensure that everything possible is done to improve it. Unless there are exceptional circumstances anything below 90% is deemed persistently absent by the government and becomes a concern. Students will be closely monitored by the school pastoral team. You may be invited in for a formal meeting with the school. Students whose attendance does not subsequently improve may be referred to the Early Intervention Team for intervention. Attendance can be placed into context in the table below:

Attendance	95%	90%	85%	80%
Number of days lost learning in an academic year	9.5	19	28.5	38
Number of lessons lost learning for a 5 period day	47.5	95	142.5	181

Is 95% attendance good? This means your child has still missed nearly 10 school days in one year. Over five years that would be nearly 50 days, this is almost a school term. Research suggests that '17 missed school days a year equals a drop in a grade in GCSE achievement'- DfE.

14 What to do if my child is absent

- Telephone the school office before 8.30am on the first day of absence and each day thereafter to inform of absence. (Each day will safeguard against possible truancy).
- If your child is going to be away from school for more than 3 days, please ring again to explain the circumstances and send a written note to the school office on the third day of absence to tell us what is wrong.
- Send a note to school on your child's return to school, regardless of whether you have already phoned.

Monitor and Review

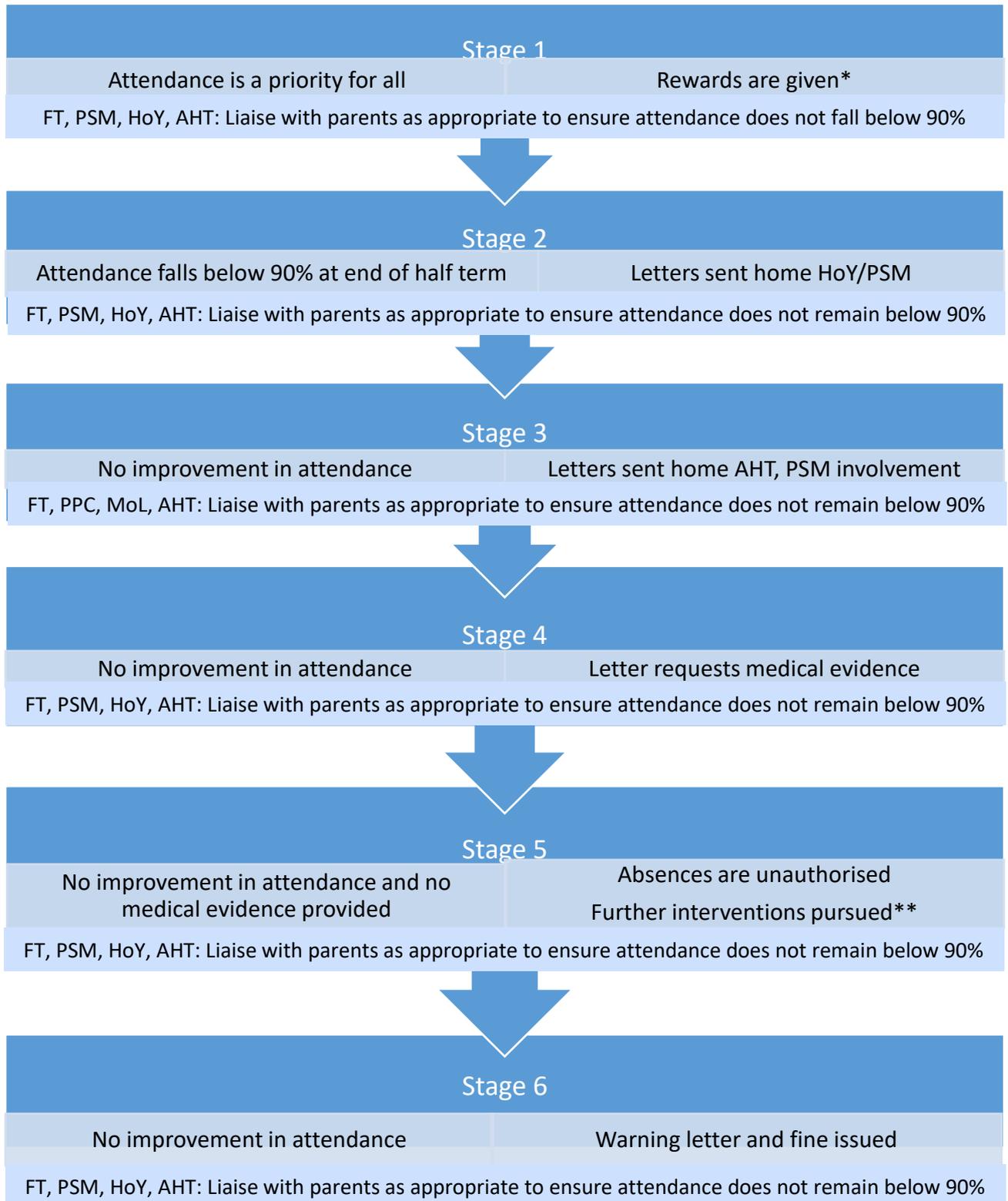
The Governors of the Standards and Welfare Committee is primarily responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Governor Approval and Review Dates

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body in **September 2018** and will be reviewed every 3 years.



Appendix 1-Attendance Strategy



* Note: Stickers, trophies, postcards, reward points, Early Lunch Pass

**Note: School Nurse, Advanced Medical Practitioner, Early Intervention Team, Home Visits

Appendix 2



St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School

Chorley New Road | Horwich | Bolton | BL6 6HW

Telephone: 01204 697456 | **Fax:** 01204 669018

Website: www.stjosephsbolton.org.uk | **Email:** office@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr T McCabe | **Deputy Headteachers:** Mr M Graham, Mrs J Morgan | **Chair of Governors:** Mrs P Jones
Registered Charity Number: 1075795 | **Facebook/Twitter:** StJosephsRCHS

Dear Parent / Guardian

We are writing to notify you about an important change in Bolton's code of conduct regarding penalty notice fines for irregular attendance at school.

From 1st September 2018, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice will be reduced and a fine will be considered where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.

This change has been introduced because of:

- Requests from Head Teachers to strengthen sanctions for unnecessary absence from school
- Increasing numbers of pupils who are classed as persistently absent
- An increase in the amount of absence due to family holidays in term time

The borough's schools and Bolton Council want all pupils to achieve the best possible results and there is a strong link between regular school attendance and attainment.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the Head Teacher.

The vast majority of pupils in Bolton have an excellent attendance record and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and make the most of their educational opportunities.

The School and Bolton Council will continue to work closely together to ensure our children can achieve the best possible outcomes.

Should you have any concerns about your child's attendance or are experiencing difficulties, please contact the school and ask for help.

More information about penalty notices can be found on Bolton Council's website:

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Tuancy.aspx>

T McCabe
Headteacher

Interim Director of People
Bolton Council

