

Attendance Policy 2016

Monitoring

By	Review Period	Method
Governing body	Annual	Meeting

Ownership, Clare Bailey, Assistant Principal

Revision History

Review	Changes	Next Review date
July 2015	Redraft	July 2016
July 2016	Change to registration	July 2017



Purpose of the Policy

St Joseph's Catholic College is committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. We acknowledge that regular attendance is a major factor in ensuring children are able to take the fullest advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and is a prerequisite to effective learning. We uphold the vision of the Local Authority which states that;

“Children and young people deserve the best start in life and we want them to enjoy life, to achieve, to stay safe from harm, to be healthy and to grow up to be successful adults in a loving, caring environment.”

St Joseph's Vision and Values and how this policy support this

Our College Vision statement states that:

“Our Catholic College seeks to be a community in which all are valued, where the life and the relationships of the College are permeated by Gospel values and in which the individual is seen as unique, with infinite potential for growth towards wholeness. The College, in active partnership with home, parish and the wider community, endeavours to prepare all its members for a future in which they will be able to make a positive contribution and take up the challenge of their faith.”

This policy supports this vision by supporting all students to attend the maximum amount of days possible and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Aim

We aim to:

- Encourage regular attendance amongst students.
- To monitor attendance regularly.
- Provide a framework so that procedures can be applied consistently in order to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality from of all students.
- Ensure that parents, students and all staff understand our procedures and expectations about attendance.
- Support students who have attendance problems through our pastoral team and outside agencies (e.g Education Welfare Officer)
- To provide the Department for Education with all the statistics relevant to attendance

The policy aims to support our vision statement and is linked to the following College Policies

Safeguarding
Confidentiality
Equality and Diversity
Behaviour

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and the Local Authority Procedures for Dealing with Absences/Education Welfare Office Casework Criteria. Appendix 2.

Attendance

The Attendance Officer works closely with Assistant Principals, Tutors, Student Managers and the Education Welfare Officer to monitor student attendance and process the registers for the whole College.

Attendance/Registration Procedures

- Session Registers are taken electronically during Registration in the morning and in all other lessons in order for the Attendance Officer to track and monitor.
- The 'statutory' morning register must be completed by 8.35am. The 'statutory afternoon register will be taken during session 5 and must be completed by 2.30
- If a student is not registered during registration, the attendance officer will send a text to notify parents/carers of the absence.
- Appendix 1 for flow chart of procedure

Punctuality, Lateness, Signing Out

- Any student arriving late must sign in at the main reception. Any student without a valid reason provided by parent/carer will be issued a pastoral detention, any student who is late more than twice in a week to any session will in addition receive an 1hr after College detention on Friday with a member of Leadership team
- Students who have to leave the College during the day must have confirmation from parent/carer and report to the Attendance Officer for an exit slip.

Notifying the College of Absences/lateness

Parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the College as early as possible of a students' absence/lateness by telephoning or e-mailing and to keep the College informed. If possible details of how long the absence is likely to be should be provided. On return to college the parent/carer should provide a note in the student planner to show the tutor or attendance officer. During periods of prolonged absence parents are asked to keep the Attendance Officer regularly informed of progress.

Unauthorised absence

Only the College can authorise absence not the parent. Parents/Carers are encouraged to keep authorised absence to a minimum. We encourage parents/carers to consider whether appointments could be made outside of college hours rather than ask for time off college where possible. Persistent absence or illness not may not be authorised without medical evidence. A medical note is required after three days of illness.

All absence will be marked as unauthorised until contact has been made by Parents/carers to the college either by phone call, email or note in the student planner.

Parents/Carers who need to request leave of absence for their children from College are asked to write a letter outlining the reasons for the request to the Principal. Only in exceptional circumstances will authorised absence be granted.

Unauthorised absence may result in a fixed penalty notice or prosecution. The fine for a fixed penalty notice is £60 per child for each parent. Parents will need to pay the £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days or Swindon Borough Council will instigate action through the courts as required by legislation.

Sixth Form Attendance / 16-19 Bursary:

Payment of the 16-19 Bursary is conditional on a student's attendance at lessons. Therefore teachers must register each Sixth Form lesson electronically.

Term dates and timing of the College day

The College Calendar and term dates including Staff Development Days are posted on the College website and published in the Student Planner. The daily routine giving times for all Sessions can also be found in the Student Planner.

Communications between Parents and College

Parents will be made aware of the regulations related to the attendance of their children at St Joseph's College. This will be done in a detailed way when students first enter the College. Parents will also be informed about problems with absence and punctuality as soon as they are identified.

In cases of illness, work will be set by staff after a period of five days. Parents need to contact the College to arrange this.

Holidays/Leave of absence in term time (see Appendix 3)

From September 2013 the DFE Guidance regarding students being allowed time out of school in term time changed. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold

of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal determines the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Monitoring, Strategies and Sanctions to improve Attendance

- Tutors will discuss and follow up absences with students during their tutor time.
- The attendance Officer will meet with the Education Welfare Officer and the Student Manager fortnightly to review attendance data and take the appropriate action which may include;
 - Early contact with parents by telephone, email or letter for students highlighted as causing concern.
 - An invitation for parents and the student to attend a meeting at the College. An action plan to improve attendance is drawn up at the meeting.
- The pastoral team will work with parents and students to explore the appropriate support to improve attendance. This might include:
 - Mentoring from Student Manager
 - Referral to the College Counsellor or Nurse
 - Working with the Parent Support Adviser
 - Completion of an Early Help Record
 - Referral to outside agencies
- Students whose attendance drops below 90% could be referred to the Education Welfare Service.
- Attendance figures for students are provided on the review sheets and can be seen on the parent portal. Parents can request a registration certificate from the attendance officer by letter or e-mail.
- The Education Welfare Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

Rewards

These will be given to encourage and recognise good attendance and punctuality and may include certificates for 100% attendance at the celebration assemblies at the end of term 6.

Extended periods of absence

In the light of LA guidance, the Governors have agreed that absence from College for periods that are in excess of four College weeks (20 College days) will result in the following:

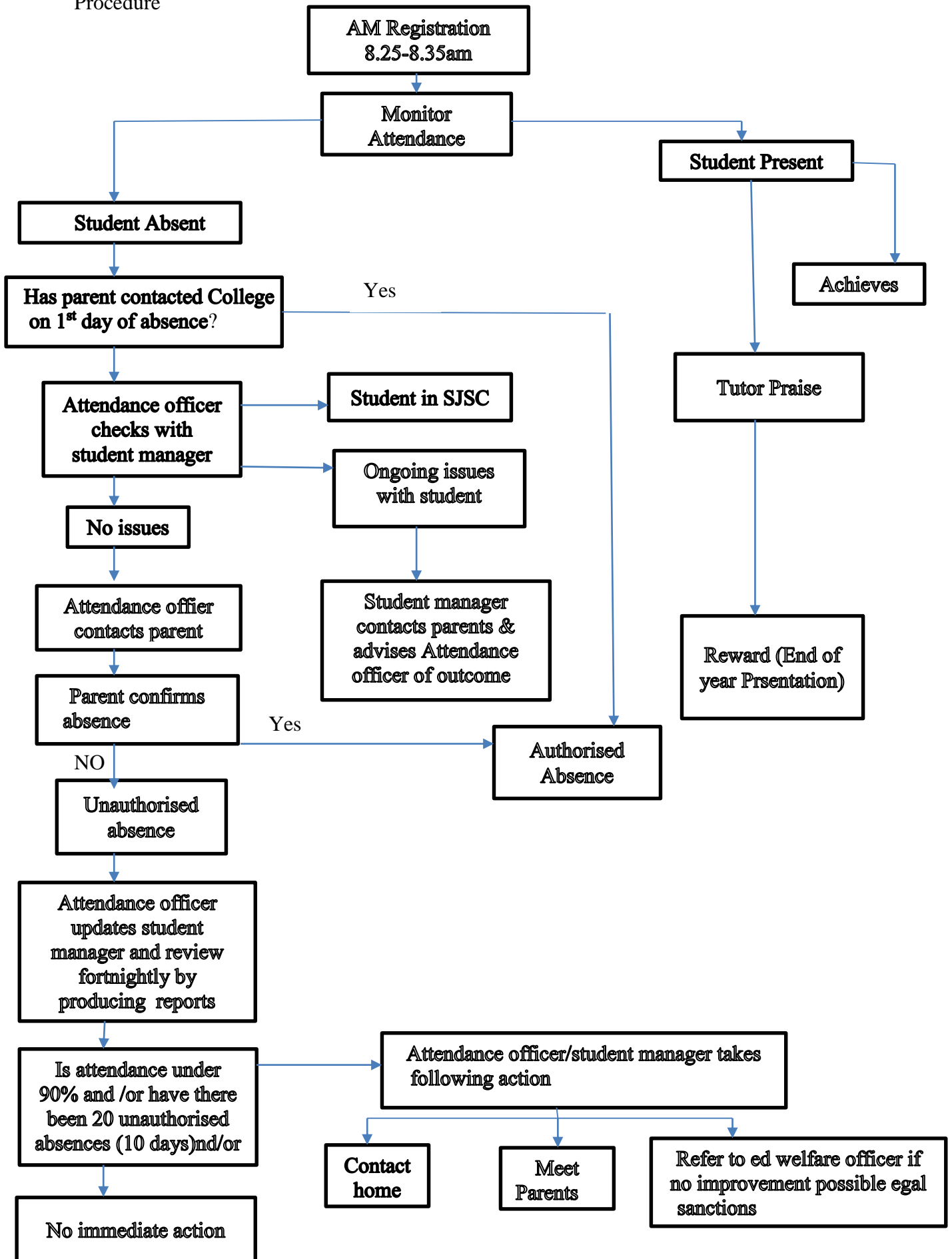
- If a student is removed for a period in excess of four College weeks (20 College days) they will be taken off roll and must re-apply for admission to the College, however, the Governors regret they can give no guarantee that they will be able to offer a place.
- In view of the fact that the College is oversubscribed, there may be other applications for the Governors to consider and any offers made would be in accordance with the oversubscription criteria of the admissions policy.
- Where cumulatively in the previous 12 months, students have been removed from College in excess of four weeks and there is no satisfactory explanation, the Governors reserve the right to take them off the College roll.

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

The College Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by staff, Governors, students and parents.

Appendix 1

Procedure



APPENDIX 2 Education Welfare

School Procedures for dealing with Absence

Each school will have different procedures for dealing with absence. However Education Welfare would expect the school to have followed certain procedures before they begin casework. The following is an example of a school's internal procedures. Education Welfare will not normally begin casework unless the parent has been invited into school to discuss attendance. The parent should always be informed that support is being requested from Education Welfare

Schools responsibilities:

- Class teacher picks up pupil's absence and records in register as initially unauthorised (unless a note has been received in advance, eg for holiday leave, medical appointment etc.)
- Parent encouraged to confirm reason by phone or text on first day – the message is then passed to the pupil's form teacher. Telephone contact made with parent on same day if no information received.
- Routine (friendly) telephone contact from school on third day to check the situation with the parent, if the child has not returned.
- Arrangements made for work to be sent home for any absence expected to be beyond a few days.
- Pupil brings note on return. A decision should be made whether to authorise the absence in the light of the explanation provided and school's policy. Other 'welcoming' strategies put in place after long absence.
- Any uncertainties over authorisation referred to senior member of staff for a decision. Parent informed in writing if absences not authorised.
- Children with persistent absence (for any reason) raised for discussion with school's pastoral system.
- Parents invited for meetings, written arrangements for authorisation made as required
- Involvement of other agencies as required.
- An Early Help Record (EHR) can be completed at any time if it is felt the pupil has unmet needs. The Education Welfare Officer could be invited to a Team Around the Child (TAC) to offer support and advice if attendance hasn't met the referral criteria

Education Welfare

Referral to Education Welfare

- The parent should be informed that a request has been made for Education Welfare to become involved.
- Except in exceptional circumstances casework will not begin unless the school has carried out appropriate action to deal with the matter. Evidence of school action must be forwarded with a referral to Education Welfare.
- Except in exceptional circumstances requests to Education Welfare should be for pupils with attendance of 90% or below with a minimum of 20 unauthorised sessions.
- All pupils with 20 continuous sessions of unauthorised absence should be passed to Education Welfare.
- A School must not delete a pupil from the school roll without informing Education Welfare.

Clear procedures are in place to ensure that the EWO has all the necessary information on which to act. The following details should be passed to Education Welfare when requesting them to carry out casework:

- Child's full name, date of birth, address, year group, age and ethnic group.
- Full name (**including first name**) and address of parent and others with parental responsibility.
- Details of the family situation as known by the school, including, wherever possible, the whereabouts of all those with parental responsibility, who is living with the child and whether the family is aware of the referral.
- Statistical information relating to the child's record of attendance, including grounds on which absences have been authorised or left unauthorised. The pupil's attendance certificate should be included.
- Evidence of what the school has already done in order to attempt to resolve the problems, including meetings with parents, letters home, contact with other professionals etc.
- The member of staff requesting Education Welfare involvement.

School Procedures for Dealing with Absence/EWO Casework Criteria
Revised July 2015

APPENDIX 3

Attendance

I am writing to ask for your support in a very important matter; Attendance.

Attendance at College is extremely important. Days off school add up to lost learning. The more days off school, the less likely students are to make the necessary progress with their studies. Research has shown a close correlation between attendance and GCSE results. Students with less than 90% attendance achieve on average between a half/one GCSE grade below that of their peers. Attendance is monitored by the Local Authority, by Ofsted and by our Governing Body.

There will be times when students are ill, have unavoidable medical appointments and unforeseen family emergencies. The College is very sympathetic to these occurrences. However, there are a significant number of requests for holidays in term time and in some cases these holidays are being taken without consent, despite previous correspondence on this matter.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that due to the change in Government legislation that came into effect on the 1st September 2013, I am no longer able to authorise absences including holidays in term time unless they are in exceptional circumstances.

Parents who need to request leave of absence for their children are asked to write a letter outlining the reasons for the request to the Principal. Only in exceptional circumstances will authorised absence be granted. What constitutes an exceptional circumstance is at the discretion of the Principal and may include unforeseen family emergencies, illness or bereavement. The Attendance Officer will need medical evidence for periods of illness over 3 days.

If an absence is not authorised you could be at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or prosecution through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine issued by Swindon Borough Council at the schools request. The fine will be £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child.

St Joseph's Catholic College regularly achieves over 95% attendance which puts it in the top 20% of schools nationally for attendance. This is due to the consistent efforts of parents and the College working together to raise and maintain attendance.

Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter.

Mr Paul Hughes
Principal
September 2015