

St. Joseph's Specialist Trust
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Student Attendance Procedures and Intervention Strategy



Christ in our Lives
'No limits ... just possibilities'

Reviewed: October 2024
Next Review: October 2025
Cycle: Annual

WEBSITE PROCEDURE

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Introduction

St. Joseph's Specialist Trust aims to ensure that all its students receive a fulltime education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his / her potential. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The organisation recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Where possible the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

The vast majority of children engage positively with school and attend regularly. However, in order to flourish, some children require an alternative education offer or may require a modified timetable to support a return to full time education provision. It is recognised that children accessing alternative provision, or a reduced or modified timetable may have additional vulnerabilities. Ofsted refer to these as Young People Missing Out On Education (PMOOE), because they are not accessing their education in school in the 'usual way'.

The organisation will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the pupil is benefitting from it.

The school recognises that absence from school and exclusion from school may be indicators of abuse and neglect, including the exploitation of children. The DSL will regularly liaise with members of school staff with responsibility for behaviour and attendance to ensure risk is identified and appropriate intervention is in place to protect children from harm.

The school will work in partnership with Surrey Police and other partners for reporting children that go missing from the site during the school day. Staff will be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and families who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives St. Joseph's will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, families and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

The school attendance procedures will be made available and accessible to the whole school community.

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of students at the school

- To ensure that attendance and punctuality is a high priority for all staff, families, students and governors
- To provide clear ways of working and define agreed roles and responsibilities, to promote consistency and fairness
- To make all expectations relating to attendance and punctuality clear to all stakeholders affected by them

Communication

All attendance related communication between school-based staff will be recorded in a clear / concise manner.

Families will be notified of attendance / punctuality issues pertaining to their child by initial phone contact, letters, and meetings.

Attendance / Achievement Communication Methods

Methods used to inform families & students of the link between Attendance and Achievement are:

- Including information in the school newsletter
- Providing an accessible copy of the school's attendance procedures
- Including student's attendance / punctuality information at Annual Reviews
- Letters
- Family Groups
- Contacting families re attendance / punctuality at an early stage
- Reviewing and updating the school attendance procedures

Admission / Attendance Registers

The school will keep:

An admissions register which records the personal details of every student at the school
 An attendance register which records every student's attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions that the school is open to students

The admissions register will include the following information for every student:

- Full name, gender, date of birth, the date the student was admitted to the school, the name of the school the student last attended and, if applicable, a statement that the student is a boarder
- The name and address of every family and carer of the student that is known to the school
- Which of these families and carers the student normally lives with and their emergency contact details

Registration Procedures

On Monday the school will open for students at 09.15. Tuesday to Friday the school will open for students at 08.45. On arrival in class for the start of the school day (09.30 Monday and 09.00 Tuesday to Friday), the Teacher, HLTA or STA will conduct registration electronically.

Registers close ½ hour after the start of the school day.

At this time the Education Administration Office will compile a list of students who are absent and will follow up any unexplained or unauthorised absences by making telephone calls to families.

Late Arrival and Absence for Part of the School Day

Students arriving after 09.30 (Monday) or 09.00 (Tuesday to Friday) will be marked as late in the register by the Class Teacher.

Students arriving after registration closes will be marked in the register as an unauthorised absence by a designated member of staff.

A record of students who are taken out of school for part of the day, for example to attend a medical appointment, will be kept in the main school office.

Attendance Procedure

1. All students who are not in school by the close of registration will be regarded as being absent and be marked in the register accordingly.
2. Telephone calls will commence at close of registration to find out why students are not in school.
3. If contact cannot be made then social services, or where necessary the police will be notified.
4. If a student is absent for three days without illness or other good reason then the Education Administration Office will liaise with the Safeguarding Team and make a referral to the local authority absence team or Education Welfare Officer depending on the local authority.
5. A meeting will need to be arranged between school and family to address the issues surrounding the absence.
6. Repeated non-attendance will also lead to review and action by the school. The trigger points for this are detailed in the Attendance strategy.

Attendance and Punctuality Meetings

At the first late meeting St. Joseph's will discuss the following:

- Enquire as to reasons for absence or persistent late attendance
- Identify any areas of need & offer support
- Implement enhanced monitoring & targeted intervention for student
- Remind family of the school's procedures and expectations
- Set achievable and reasonable targets
- Utilise incentives and rewards

Term Time Holiday Absence

Holidays in term time are discouraged by the school.

Holidays in term time are not a right, and will not necessarily be granted.

Leave will only be granted where proper procedures have been followed.

Special Leave will not be granted retrospectively.

The Executive Principal is the only member of staff who can authorise a special leave request.

Requesting Term Time Leave

A request for a student to have special leave during term time must be made using a Special Leave Request Form, which is available from the school office.

Each special leave request is considered on an individual basis, using the criteria laid out below.

All applications for special leave in term time must be made at least 7 days in advance by the family, carer(s) or corporate family that the student normally resides with.

If the school does not authorise the special leave request and the student is subsequently absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

The additional period of absence will be marked as unauthorised (unless there are unavoidable reasons).

A special leave request for a period longer than two weeks is seen as exceptional.

Criteria Used to Authorise or Deny Special Leave:

- The amount of time requested
- The age of the student
- The student's general absence/attendance record
- The length of the proposed leave
- The student's educational needs
- The general welfare of the student
- The circumstances of the request
- The purpose of the leave
- The frequency of the activity
- When the request was made

The Executive Principal is the only member of staff who can authorise a special leave request during the school term.

Re-integration

Students who are returning to school after a period of absence will be supported to reintegrate to St. Joseph's.

Strategies

The following strategies will be used by the school to address attendance and punctuality issues:

- Maintaining clear and effective policies and procedures
- Making the school's attendance procedure available to families, staff and students in accessible formats.
- Targeted interventions by the learning mentor

Resources

In order to achieve and maintain good levels of attendance the school will utilise the following:

- Electronic Registers
- Ensure that all attendance and punctuality statistical information is recorded in a clear way, and is readily accessible.
- All attendance / punctuality records will be kept for three years (at least).
- Keep a record of all students who arrive after school starts, in order to inform families and to be used to determine students in need of targeted intervention.

A designated member of staff will contact families of every student who is not present at school by close of registration on the first day of absence. All information re first day calls will be recorded and logged appropriately.

A document publishing basic information about the school will be made available to families / carers. This document will contain key information relating to the school's ethos and procedure regarding attendance and punctuality.

Roles & Responsibilities

Governors

- A designated governor will participate in reviewing the school attendance procedure at least once a year.
- Attendance will be discussed at every governors meeting.
- Will ensure that an appropriate budget will be allocated to enhancing the school's ability to address attendance and punctuality issues.

Headteacher, Inclusion and Achievement

- Will conduct register checks on all registers at least once a term.
- Will inform governors of attendance progress.
- Will meet with individual families at the appropriate staged meetings.

Teachers

- Responsible for taking and maintaining daily registers in line with relevant legislation "The Education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006".
- Obtaining written explanations for absence (medical notes etc).

Families

- To ensure their child is present and on time at school every day.
- To ensure their child is collected from school on time every day.
- Ensuring explanations are given to class teacher/office staff for all periods of absence.
- Attending all meetings regarding their child's attendance.
- Notifying school of child's absence by close of registration on the first day of absence.
- Make written requests for special leave during term time.
- To adhere to the school's policies, decisions and contracts.

External Agencies

External agencies' involvement will be sought for the following reasons:

- To provide support for families re attendance and/or punctuality.
- To seek advice / information regarding legislation or good practice.
- To initiate family penalty notices / prosecution procedures.
- Referrals to external agencies will be conducted by the school's designated liaison officer in the following instances:
 - In accordance with relevant legislation and statutory provisions
 - Individual targets not met or home school agreements / contracts breached.
 - No improvement in attendance performance within specified time.
 - To seek advice / information or support.
 - Before taking a student off the school's admission's register. o When a home school agreement / contract has been breached.
 - If there are attendance patterns that may cause concerns relating to child protection issues.

Where other agencies are already involved with a family, a decision to make a referral may be made at an earlier stage in the interest of safeguarding children.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school attendance procedure will be reviewed and evaluated annually. Evaluation of the school's policies and procedures will be conducted by taking into account:

- The views and feedback from; families, students, partners and external agencies
- Statistical data (spreadsheets, charts, graphs)
- The attainment levels across the school
- The school's performance in meeting the targets set across the school at the beginning of the academic year

Links to other documents

The attendance procedure and procedures links with the following other school documents:

- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Insurance Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Inclusion Support Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Attendance Intervention Strategy

1. Attendance is Recorded as Unauthorised

- Refer attendance concerns to the safeguarding team
- Contact Social Care
- Contact the LA Inclusion Team
- Check Behaviour Records
- Referral to weekly Student Welfare Meeting

2. General non-attendance

- If the student's attendance falls below 96%, this will be flagged to the weekly Welfare meeting as a point of discussion
- If attendance falls below 94%, a referral will be made to the Safeguarding Team, who will make contact with the family to identify causes and initial strategies for improvement
- If attendance falls below 92%, a referral will be made to the Local Authority, including the SEN team, Education Welfare Officer and/ or Inclusion Team for advice and intervention



Contact the Family to find out why a student has not come into school.

Inform Social Care that a Problem has arisen.

After three days - Education Administration Office will liaise with the Safeguarding Team and make a referral to the local authority absence team.

Class team will send work home to support home learning and liaise weekly.



Meet with Parents to discuss the barriers to attendance.

- Discuss any current difficulties being faced
- Discuss personalised strategies aimed to improve attendance.

Attended by Education and Therapies.

Solutions may include:

- Resolving issues around transport.
- Personalised Programme
- Personalised Sensory Diet
- Removal of transition barrier



Action the Attendance Plan

- Time bonded strategies. E.g. Zoom circle time, incentivise attendance.
- Liaise with other connected professionals e.g. Psychiatrist, Psychology or CAMHS Team.
- Continue to review the obstacles to attendance at admissions
- Review meetings with Family, Social Care, Education and Therapies.
- Weekly referral to Student Welfare Meeting



Consider either:

- residential provision to remove transition obstacles.
- Referral to another provision.
- Unable to meet need and referral for supported living model.

Attendance

| Attendance Data | Including Covid | Without Covid | Target |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------|
| 2020-2021 | 94.08% | 93.86% | |
| 2021-22 (March) | 92.11% | 92.65% | 96% |
| 2022-2023 | 89% | N/A | 96% |
| 2023-2024 | 90% | NA | 96% |

Significant Impacts on Attendance Figures

2020-2021

- 2 long-term absences; two not attending since last Summer due to shielding and another awaiting transplant

2020-2021

- Student who has left due to transplant left on role and another with significant absence is attending with support from CAMHS

2022-2023

- Four students with significant mental health conditions which has affected their ability to transition

2022-2023

- Four students with significant mental health conditions which has affected their ability to transition and LA not commissioning a number of student transport delaying their return by six weeks.

2023-2024

Two students struggled with attendance due to transitioning challenges. One student while on role left a year ago this has been continually escalated with the LA. One student required new funding to return to school with increased support which was delayed.

Successful Intervention Strategies

- Resolving issues around transport.; changes of students, driver, solo transport
- Personalised Programme; bespoke activity to start the day
- Personalised Sensory Diet: regulating on arrival
- Facetime students at home to allow them to access social activities; Circle Time and Candle Time
- CAMHS input: Change of medication to reduce anxieties
- Removal of transition barrier: move to weekly residential to remove transition barrier
- Reduced school day and then gradual return to full timetable

Intervention strategies to be trialled

Inclusion referral plan implemented to support class teams with specific behaviours and to help with integration back into school.

Date Procedure Reviewed

| Updated | Changes | By | Version |
|----------------|--|---------------|---------|
| December 2009 | Developed | | v1 |
| March 2011 | <p>Registration Procedures</p> <p>2. On arrival in class for the start of the school day (9.30am Mondays and 8.50am Tuesdays to Fridays), the Teacher, HLTA or STA will conduct registration electronically.</p> <p>Attendance Procedure</p> <p>4 If a student is absent for three days without contact from families the designated liaison officer, SENCO for day students and CPLO for residential students, will advise the Education Administration Office on contacting the individual LA SEN caseworker or EWO.</p> | Alan Day | V1.1 |
| September 2014 | Change from headteacher to Principal and Parent to Family. No further changes required. | Annie Sutton | v1.2 |
| September 2017 | Amended learner to student, job titles, school day timings | Annie Sutton | V1.3 |
| January 2019 | Minor change to Trust | Alan Day | V1.4 |
| February 2020 | Interim review to reclassify policy to procedure and cycle changed to annual | Admin | n/a |
| October 2020 | No Changes | Annie Sutton | V1.5 |
| Summer 2021 | Minor amendments | Simon Jaggard | V1.6 |
| December 2021 | Minor amendments | Simon Jaggard | V1.7 |
| Spring 2022 | Added safeguarding and inclusion cross-referencing and added Attendance Intervention Strategy | Simon Jaggard | V1.8 |
| Summer 2023 | Update to attendance strategy stats and comment | Simon Jaggard | V1.9 |
| October 2024 | Update to attendance strategy stats and comment | Simon Jaggard | V1.10 |