

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will already be aware, the impact of Covid on school attendance nationally in Autumn Term 2021 was dramatic: *Almost 1.8 million children missed at least 10% of school in the autumn term in England, according to new estimates.*

If a child is registered at a school it is essential that they attend school regularly to allow a child to fulfil their potential. As a school we want all our children to achieve and we are constantly looking at ways of improving our pupil's attendance for that to happen. For a school to be considered to have good attendance we must have attendance of at least **97%**.

Our current school attendance is 95%.

We are concerned about this and have made it a key target for our school to improve attendance. We can only achieve this by working together.

St Joseph's believes that regular, punctual school attendance is vital for high achievement in order that pupils can be the best that they can be. It is well documented that regular attendance of pupils is closely related to their levels of achievement. We have clear evidence that pupils who attend regularly make better progress than their classmates who have poor attendance or are regularly taken out of school on holiday or to visit relatives abroad. This makes the issue of regular attendance of great importance. Under education legislation, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so, without reasonable excuse, can result in referrals to the Local Authority with the prospect of fines or prosecution for those parents, should a child's attendance not improve rapidly.

Absence Procedure

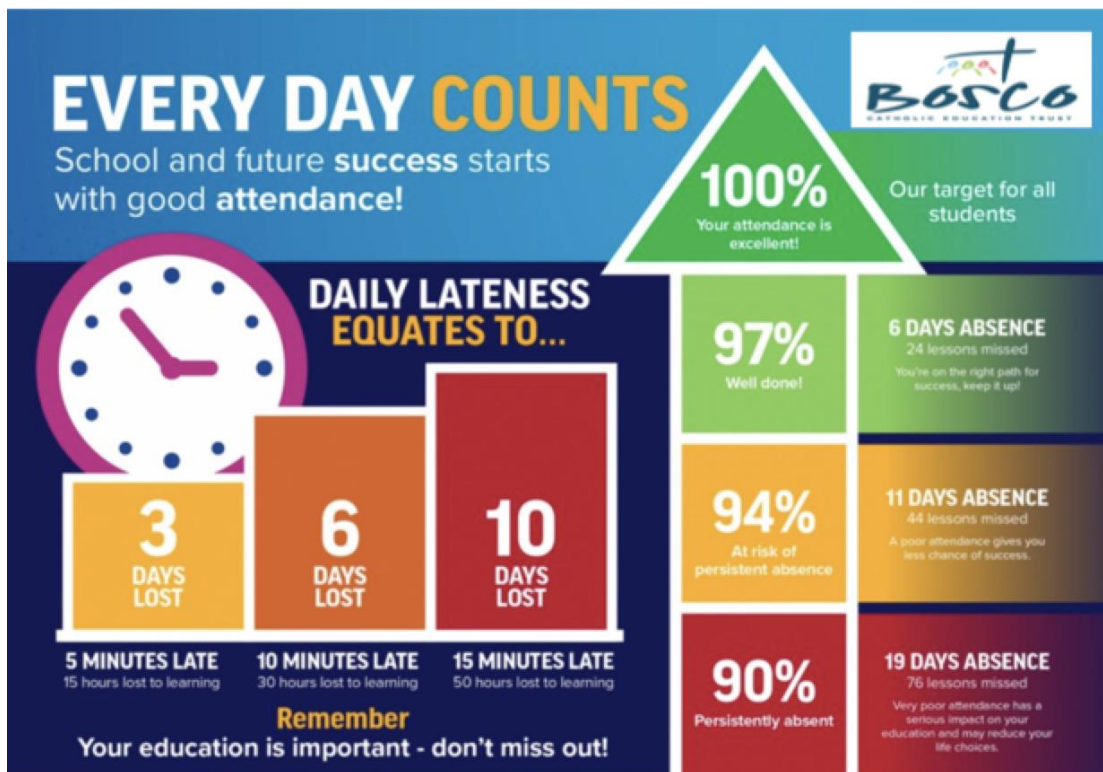
If your child is unable to attend school please notify us via the Studybugs app giving a reason for the absence. This is the preferred option. Alternatively please ring the school office on 01444 452584.

What is Good Attendance?

Our minimum expected target for all pupils is **97%**.

All pupils whose attendance is below **90%** are classified as Persistent Absentees and, depending upon personal circumstances, face possible referral to the Education Entitlement Service.

The image below provides more detailed information about attendance over the course of a full academic year.



At St Joseph's we know that working in partnership with parents has the best impact on improving a child's attendance. Our attendance team supports parents, pupils, teaching staff and other professionals to secure the highest possible attendance for all our pupils. At St Joseph's, our aim is to support parents and help them overcome any difficulties they may have with getting their child to school. Ensuring good attendance enables learners to have access to the best life chances and future success in their education. It is important to realise that after all endeavours, if a child fails to attend regularly at a school, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my child's attendance is a concern?

We will ensure that you are regularly informed of your child's attendance. If your child's attendance becomes a concern you may receive a letter requesting that you attend a meeting with a member of staff in order to discuss the barriers to attendance.

If, after initial measures to support your child have been unsuccessful, parents may be invited to attend a meeting with a member of the Governing Body where these concerns will be discussed with a member the leadership team, child's class teacher and Mrs Walker.

What If I Need To Make A Medical or Dental Appointment?

We hope you will support us in maintaining good attendance by booking medical and dental appointments either in the school holidays or after 3.15pm.

The current school year has 188 days. This means that there are 60 other days that are available for appointments to be made. Most medical and dental surgeries also offer appointments outside of school hours. We appreciate hospital appointments must be accepted when available and this may be during the school day.

How Do I Request A Leave Of Absence For My Child?

Should you wish to request to take your child out of school for exceptional circumstances, please contact us and request a **Withdrawal from Learning Form**. These forms should be returned to the school office or via your child's class teacher at least 2 weeks before the requested dates for absence.

Once received, Mrs Walker will consider your request. Only those requests, which are considered to be due to exceptional circumstances, will be authorised.

What are the Rules About Term Time Holidays and Penalty Notices?

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are generally issued where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10 school week period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria.

FPNs are issued per parent, per child and are an alternative to prosecution. This gives the parent an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If you pay the FPN within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £60.

Please note: should the period of unauthorised absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, a FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead the matter may be brought directly before the court.

Pupils at St Joseph's make exceptional progress during their time with us. Last year our Key Stage 2 results, phonics results and Early Years results (Reception class) were significantly above the national average when compared to other schools. This puts our school in the top 25% of schools in the country. We can only achieve this if your child is in school. Please continue to work with us and ensure the best possible outcomes for your child.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Catherine Walker
Headteacher