



# St Joseph's RC High School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by Governors: September 2020

Date for Review: September 2023

Signed Chair of Governors: P.Jones

Signed Headteacher: T.McCabe

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St. Joseph's RC School recognises the clear link between the attendance of students and their attainment. 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 between excellent attendance & excellent GCSE results.

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. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. 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, e-praise, 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 behaviour policy- Rewards and Sanctions)
- Attendance is given a high profile through displays, assemblies, newsletters and social media.

#### **4. 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 Tutors/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 via a weekly pastoral panel meeting.

#### **5. 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.

##### **The 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.
- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the

minimum amount of time necessary. Full day appointments (unless hospital visits) will not be authorised.

#### **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 2020.***
- 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.
- Analyse the attendance data weekly and half termly to identify areas/pupils of concern and intervene appropriately.

#### **6. 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 main office school reception where they must sign in and give reason for late arrival.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 12.00pm during Period 4 with class teacher.
- The school day ends at 2.45pm

#### **7. 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/Phonecall 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.

#### 8. Unauthorised Absences:

- 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) process once their child has had 6 sessions of unauthorised absence. (2 sessions per day, morning and afternoon registration, therefore 3 days absent from school, per 2 half terms)
- After 6 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 once 10 sessions are reached.
- 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.

#### 9. Holidays in Term Time

The Government has amended key legislation which came into force with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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.

#### **10. 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.

#### **11. 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](http://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)

#### **12. 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 school office for clarification.
- The office 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 office/Head of Year/SLT.
- In extreme cases The Local Authority will be notified by the head teacher that a child is missing.
- If a member of staff finds the child the head teacher must be told at once. Parents/carers, police and other authorities will be notified.
- If the child is Looked After then the police must be notified and social worker.

#### **13. 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 office/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.

#### 14. 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, sometime 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?

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.

#### 15. Penalty Notices:

##### What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over two consecutive half terms. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child. You have to pay a fine but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at

school improves. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

**Is a warning given?**

The school will send you a formal letter of warning telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued. This warning letter will also include details of your child's absences. If you receive a warning letter this is an opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues and reaches 10 sessions (5 school days) or more, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case. However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

**What are the costs?**

£60 if you pay within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice or £120 if you pay after this but within 28 days. (Per parent, per child).

**Is there an appeal process?**

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

**What happens if I don't pay?**

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child. If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

**Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?**

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. If the poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

**What can I do?**

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child. Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school you should contact the school as soon as possible. Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

**Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?**

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter. Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

Child Employment and Enforcement Officer  
Early Intervention Service  
2nd Floor, BASE  
Marsden Road  
Bolton  
BL1 2PF  
Tel: 01204 338173

Every lesson counts. Improving attendance, raising attainment

#### **16. What to do if my child is absent**

- Telephone the school office before 8.20am 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.

#### **17. Monitor and Review:**

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

#### **18. Governor Approval and Review dates:**

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the governing body in September 2020 and will be reviewed every 3 years.

#### **19. COVID19 Insert:**

Returning to school or college is vital for children and young people's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of an education setting is detrimental to cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children and young people. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children and young people's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all students can return to St Joseph's in September 2020 following the government guidance.

We will strive to make sure that students, staff and other adults do not come into the setting if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#), or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in settings and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Parents who contact school to state that their child has symptoms will be directed to stay at home and complete a test and to update school on the outcome. If the test is positive, the child must stay at home for 7 days. If it is negative, the child must return to school immediately. Any absence after this confirmation will be classed as unauthorised.

If anyone in the setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home. They must be advised to follow ['Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed](#)

[coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

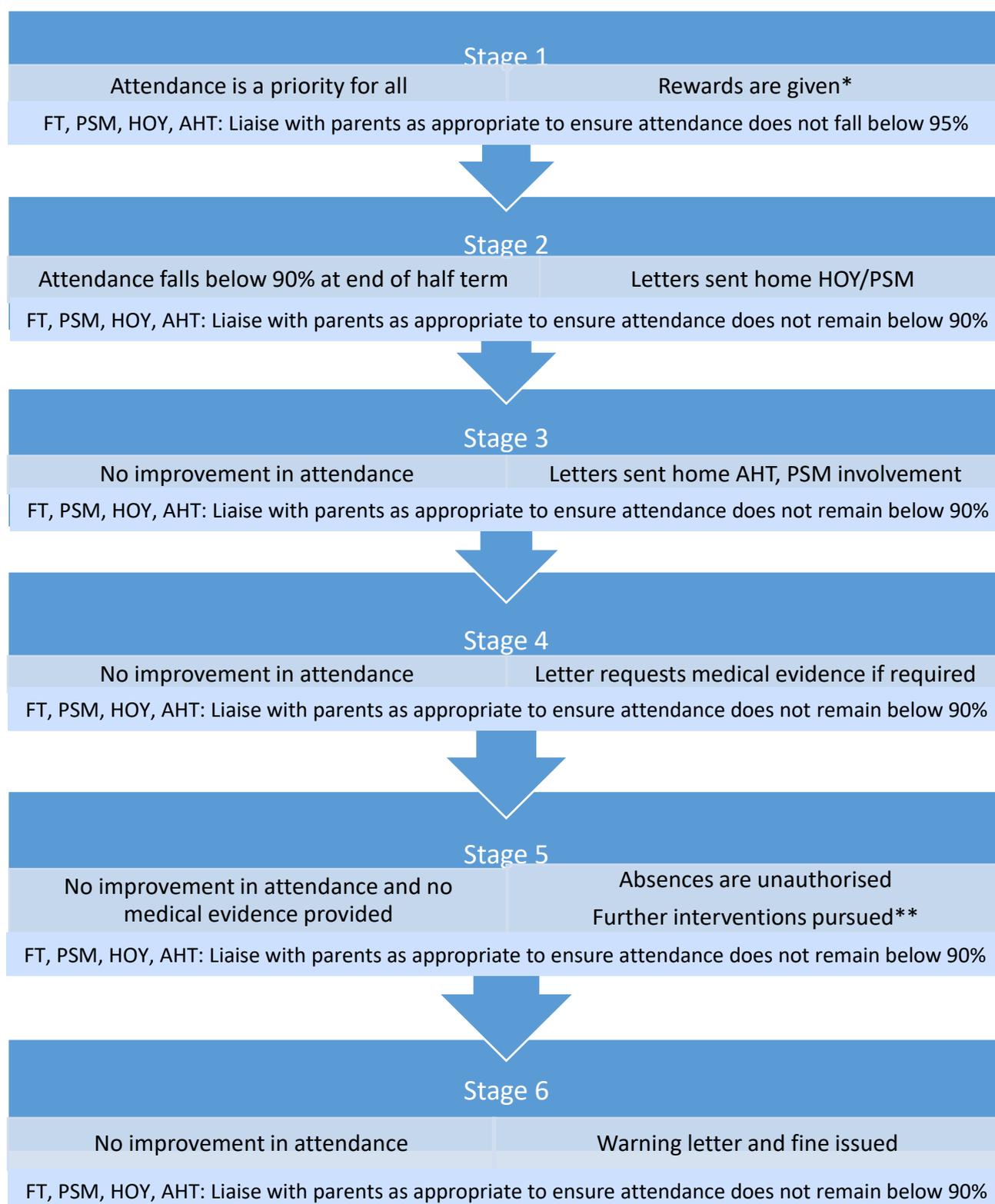
Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on August 1<sup>st</sup> meaning that all pupils are able to return to school in September. Should a local outbreak of the virus rise in our community, then these children will be given authorization to shield inline with government guidance.

Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we will immediately offer them access to remote education via e-praise, zoom or Teams. The School day in September will change to support government guidance regarding bubbles and social distancing. The school 'warning bell' will ring at 8.25am to signal to students to make their way to lesson 1. The legal Registration of all pupils will take place during period 1 by class teachers with form time moving to later in the school day.

PM registration will still take place during P4 by class teachers. This will however be split due to split lunches of KS3 and KS4. KS4 will have the registration at 12.00pm. KS3 will have the registration at 12.45pm.



# Appendix 1-Attendance Strategy



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

\*\*Note: School Nurse, Advanced medical practionner, Early Intervention Team, Home Visits

## Appendix 2

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day