

# St Joseph The Worker R C Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Evelyn Clayton B.A.Hons QTS

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September

Dear families,

First of all, I would like to thank you for adhering to the new school times; I know that many of you have had to rearrange your timetables and child care to fit the new school day - and this is very much appreciated. The first couple of weeks are always more difficult - staff are getting used to new parents and so it takes a while longer to dismiss children at the end of the day - ensuring that every child goes home with the correct adult. We thank you for your patience.

Attendance is a top priority in the government's published white paper. All schools have to tighten the regulations and follow procedures. This includes term time holidays. Holidays during term time are not allowed to be authorised except in extreme circumstances and will be dealt with on a case by case basis. A child's otherwise good attendance in school is not an acceptable reason for a holiday during term time - it is expected that children have good attendance. Whilst we do understand the reasons behind taking children on holiday during term time (financial constraints, taking time out of work) we are no longer able to use these as 'exceptional circumstances'.

If a family has requested a holiday and this has been unauthorised, the attendance officer will send a letter (**written by Salford L.A**) to explain that this will result in a fine. If parents decide to go away despite this, a fine is then issued **DIRECTLY FROM SALFORD COUNCIL. SCHOOL DOES NOT RECEIVE ANY MONEY AT ALL - ALL FINES GO STRAIGHT TO THE LOCAL COUNCIL.** School is simply following the correct procedures. Penalty notices are £60 per parent/ per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Unpaid fines result in a court order.

If attendance dips below 90% this is an automatic cause for concern and will be picked up by the Educational Welfare Officer. Obviously, this is often due to illness and cannot be avoided. If parents have informed the school of illness, this is recorded in registers and is a valid reason why a child is not in school. One day's absence counts as two sessions when recorded (as registers are taken morning and afternoon). There may also be the odd day which may be authorised for children attending a family wedding / funeral / other exceptional circumstance. Doctor and dentist appointments (if routine) should ideally be taken out of school time - however, if this is not possible, then this would be authorised. You may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment time for school records.

Attendance is vital for children to receive a good education - if they miss the first part of lessons every day, this has a huge effect on their overall learning. They find themselves playing 'catch up' constantly and this, in turn, can affect their self-esteem.



I would ask that we all work together in order to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality in school. We want to have very good working relationship with all of our families and will support you as much as we can.

Best Wishes

Sincerely,



**E Clayton**  
Headteacher

