



St. Joseph's
Catholic Infant
& Junior Schools
Birtley



Monday 27th November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Promoting Strong Attendance

Receiving a good full-time education will give your child the best possible start in life. Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

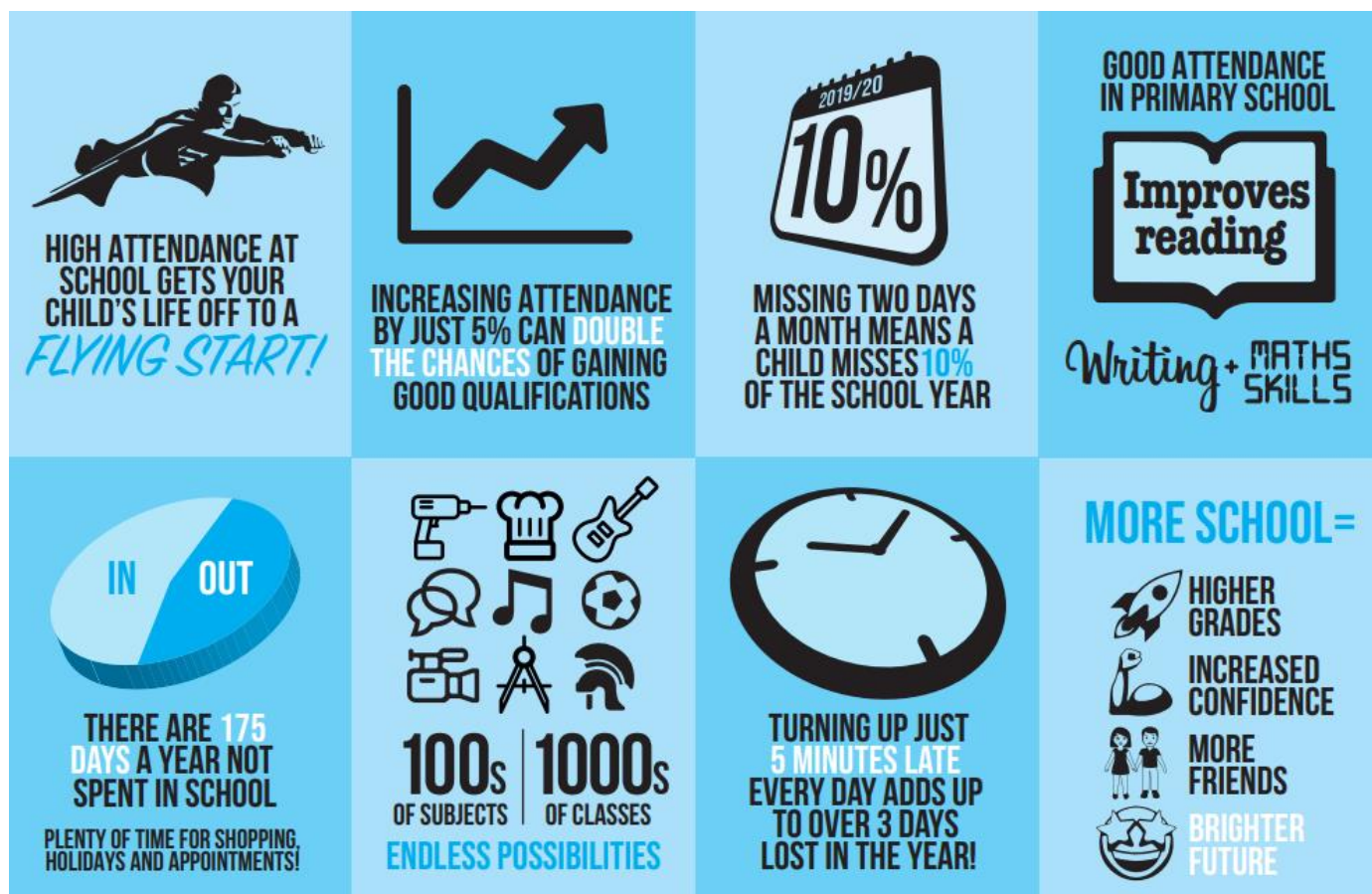
What you can do to help:

- Make sure your child arrives at school on time.
- Ensure that they attend school regularly.
- Arrange appointments for outside of school time.

Good attendance ensures that your child gets to enjoy social time with their friends and makes them feel more secure in their learning. By attending school regularly, children do not usually worry or develop a fear of missing out! The above strategies encourage habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our school curriculum is built on sequential building blocks, which are purposely taught to support pupils through our units of study. For example, in mathematics, we follow a 3-weekly unit of study approach, in which each day builds upon a new skill, or the previous days' learning.

The decision about whether an absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean that an absence will be authorised.



For those children whose attendance is of a concern, you will receive attendance updates on a regular basis and where necessary, our Education Welfare Officer will become involved: this also applies to those children with regular lateness. Where a child classifies as a persistent absentee (under 90% attendance), referrals to Gateshead's Legal Intervention Team may be made if there are significant number of unauthorised absences. You can also check your child's attendance to date through the Arbor app.

Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Slight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned

We also ask that if a pupil is late, they are not just dropped off at either schools' door, without an adult bringing them into school. We have had several instances particularly at the infant school, where parents have dropped off pupils at the infant door, without staff members being made aware of the pupil's presence.

Neighbours: I also ask you to be courteous to our local community. We have had complaints from our neighbours at St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School because those living in the terraces behind the back lane have been blocked from entering and exiting their houses by cars parking across the road. We are saddened that when our neighbours have challenged our parents and carers, they have been in receipt of an unpleasant exchange. We therefore plead with you to remember that the roads outside of both schools are public roads. Northumbria Police have been notified and will be conducting regular checks.

Swimming: Please note that swimming in Years 5/6 is a statutory and mandatory part of the curriculum and is not an opt-in/opt-out activity. Therefore, please ensure that your child has their swimming kit each week. In certain circumstances, regular non-participation in swimming can be considered to be unauthorised absence.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities:	Parent/Carer Understands:
Will ensure my child attends school on time, every day – this is the law	Poor attendance and punctuality is a safeguarding concern.
Will be on time to pick up my child at the end of the school.	Holidays in term time will not be authorized.
Will call school to explain why my child will not be attending e.g. illness etc.	Will only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
Will keep school up to date with my home address and telephone numbers.	It is a legal requirement to ensure my child attends school regularly.

We thank you in anticipation of your cooperation and support as we seek to follow the government's recommendations for promoting strong attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K. Swaddle.

Executive Headteacher