**ST MARGARET’S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Encourage one another and build each other up”

1 Thessalonians 5:11



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| **Approved by:** | Governors | **Date:** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | January 2022 | |
| **Next review due by:** | December 2022 | |

St Margaret’s CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

**OVERVIEW**

The Governing Body at St Margaret’s CE Primary School strongly believe that Attendance and Punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that school achieves a minimum of 96% attendance throughout the year.

In promoting the belief that Attendance and Punctuality are important values we will be helping to ensure our children benefit fully from the Educational Opportunities available to them, to equip them for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as citizens, employees and employers.

We believe that;

* Repeated and consistent Lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
* Prolonged and consistent Absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.
* Unnecessary, parentally condoned and Unauthorised Absence should be challenged and both school and parents/carers held Responsible for the impact this may have on any pupils Full Attendance.

We are required to monitor and manage all Attendance and Absence in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations, to follow the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines in relation to Attendance and Absence and expect all parents/carers to work with us to ensure all pupils maintain an Attendance figure of at least 96% throughout the academic year.

The Government has identified that when any child’s Attendance falls below 90% they are classed as a ‘Persistent Absentee’*.*

In July 2011 the DfE produced a document ‘*Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier*’ This document states that;

*“The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. The children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge.”*

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

Good attendance at school *makes a difference* to a child’s education. If children get into bad habits at Primary School then they will continue them at Secondary School.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school each term.

**PARENTS will**:

o Ensure that their children attend school regularly

o Notify school on the first day of absence before 9.15am by phone/letter

o Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances at least six weeks before the planned absence

o Ensure when their child returns to school they bring in written confirmation of why they were absent if requested

o Hand in medical evidence for 4 or more days absence due to illness if requested

o Meet with the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher to discuss their child’s attendance when necessary

**CLASS TEACHERS will:**

o Complete register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)

o Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the Deputy or Head Teacher

o Provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances

o Make parents aware of concerns over good attendance

**OFFICE STAFF will:**

o Input attendance data on system

o Print off official reports for each calendar month for monitoring purposes

o Complete the absence record book

o Monitor alongside the Deputy Head Teacher, patterns of attendance and lateness

o Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence

**DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER will:**

o Monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified

o Inform Governors of attendance records

o Inform/Meet with parents whose children’s attendance causes concern

o Make referrals to the School Attendance and Welfare Service

o Make referrals to the School Nurse team.

**ATTENDANCE AND WELFARE SERVICE will:**

o Support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns.

**SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

**ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**

School Attendance Registers are ‘legal documents’ and as such must be kept in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations. Head teachers are responsible for ensuring that the Attendance Register is accurate and up to date. (It is an offence in law not to do so)

Attendance Registers can and are viewed by School staff, Parents/Carers (for their own child/ren), Governors, Local Authority Officers, OfSTED and the Magistrates Court.

All Pupils must be Registered twice every day, once at the beginning of school in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Every half-day Registration mark must show if the pupil was Present or Absent.

All Absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED** in accordance with the DfE Guidelines.

**AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Any half day Absence from school for which the parent/carer of a child has;

a) provided the Head teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence,

b) provided the Head teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence that can be

accepted and/or is Allowed for the purposes of Authorisation and,

c) that the Head teachers agrees the Pupil should not be in school for that half day session.

**Note**

*Absences may be Authorised for a medical appointment in school time, BUT, school may ask parents/carers to ensure their child attends Registration, is collected from school and then returned after the appointment in order for the Absence to be Authorised. The timing of and venue of the appointment may need to be evidenced and discussed with school to agree arrangements.*

*In the case of emergency parents/carers should negotiate with the Head teacher on an individual basis. Parents will be advised on the amount of absence that the Head teacher can agree to Authorise in each instance. Any extension to the original agreement may not be Authorised.*

**If the reason you have provided can allow the Head teacher to Authorise the Absence no further action can or will be taken.**

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Any half day Absence from school for which the parent/carer of the child has;

1. not provided the Head teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence,
2. provided a reason but that reason is not, or cannot be accepted for the purpose of Authorisation and,
3. the Head teacher is unable to agree that the Pupil should not be in school for that half day session.

**Note**

*Late arrival in the Classroom for Registration, both in the morning and afternoon, can be recorded as Late and/or Unauthorised Absence for that half day session. (See Registration and Registers below)*

**If no reason for an Absence has been provided and/or if the reason provided is not or cannot be accepted for the purposes of Authorisation further action can or will be taken.**

**REGISTRATION and REGISTERS**

**Registration**

Registration happens IN THE CLASSROOM.

That a child has arrived on school premises, is on their way to the Classroom or has a sibling who has been marked present at Registration cannot be accepted for the Registration ‘on time’ of a child.

**Mornings**

Registration for all children Opens at 8.50am and Closes at 9.00am in the morning.

Lessons start at 9.00am in the morning.

**Afternoons**

Registration for KS1 children Opens at 1.10pm and Closes at 1.20pm in the afternoon.

Registration for KS2 children Opens at 1.20pm and Closes at 1.30pm in the afternoon.

Lessons start at 1.30pm in the afternoon for KS2, 1.20pm for KS1.

**Lateness**

If a child is not IN THE CLASSROOM before 9.00am or 1.20pm/1.30pm they will be LATE for Registration AND the start of Lessons.

Arriving IN THE CLASSROOM after 9.00 but before 9.15am in the morning or after 1.30pm but before 1.35pm in the afternoon they will be marked ‘L’ AUTHORISED LATE.

Registers Close at 9.15am and 1.35pm and if a child arrives after this they will be marked ‘U’ UNAUTHORISED LATE

The ‘U’ mark counts the same as an ‘O’ mark and is UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE on your child’s Registration/Attendance Record for that half day session.

Pupils arriving at school after 9.00am will enter via the main doors by the school office.

If your child arrives LATE more than 7 times in any school year the ‘privilege’ of school marking this LATE will be ‘withdrawn’ and if your child is not IN THE CLASSROOM before 9.00am in the morning or 1.30pm in the afternoon this will be marked as ‘U’ Unauthorised Late.

**Unauthorised Lateness ‘U’ and/or Unauthorised Absence ‘O’ can lead to parents/carers being Referred to the Attendance and Prosections Service in Sandwell and parents/carers being liable to Penalty Notices and/or Magistrates Court proceedings against them.**

**Registers**

All marks in the Register are made by the Head teacher or by someone delegated by the Head teacher to do so, but, the Head teacher remains responsible for all marks made.

It is the Head teachers Legal Responsibility to ensure that registers are kept up to date and accurate and in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

It is an offence not to do so.

It is the Class Teachers responsibility to take Registration at a time identified by the Head teacher and to put a mark (Present /, \, or Absent N, I, O, U,) against all those on the Register who are IN THE CLASSROOM before Registration Closes.

Class teachers must ensure that they complete Registration accurately and in accordance with the Head teachers instruction.

Class teachers MUST close Registration at 9.00am and 1.30pm.

**ATTENDANCE and ILLNESS**

Unfortunately, and from time to time children do suffer from illness. When this happens, as parents/carers, we need to make a judgement as to if that illness means the child is prevented from or is unable to attend school.

It is very well known that many children can be ‘a little under the weather’ first thing in the morning and you may decide to keep them at home only for them to recover almost immediately or a little later in the day. If your child has been unwell in the morning and shows signs of recovery we encourage parents/carers to return their child to school later in the morning or after lunch.

Parents/carers are the best people to make this judgement and to decide if their child should stay at home but you must advise school BEFORE 9.15am of the circumstances and explain the reason for the Absence to avoid that Absence being recorded as Unauthorised.

We encourage parents to make their decisions knowing that if you bring your child to school and advise us that they may be a little unwell we are happy to monitor their condition and agree with you that should they deteriorate we will call you to let you know and ask you to collect them where necessary**.**

**The Absence for that half day session will be Authorised by the Head teacher and no further action will be taken.**

Reasons provided for any Absence and the frequency of previous Absence/Illness can/will determine if that Absence is recorded as Authorised or Unauthorised.

If your child is Absent and you do not call the school before 9.15am the Absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.

If your child is Absent and you have not contacted school before 9.15am a member of School staff will attempt to contact you (via the contact details you are required to provide and to keep up to date). If you do not respond to this contact or if the contact details are out of date the absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.

**Safeguarding**

In some cases of Absence and/or lack of contact with parents/carers we may need to make contact with other Agencies (i.e. Social Care, the Police, etc.,) to meet our ‘Safeguarding Children’ responsibilities.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school’s procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2019) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016) All Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12. This attendance policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding procedures.

**Medication**

We would want parent/carers to know that in the case of a child being prescribed medicines that this does not automatically mean that the child should be absent from school or that this Absence will be Authorised. The school’s medical policy allows us to administer medicines, with written consent, which may result in there being no reason or necessity for any Absence.

**Absence as a result of Illness**

School can allow parents/carers up to a maximum of 7 days or 14 half day sessions each Academic year (from September to the following July) when the Head teacher can/will agree to Authorise a child’s Absence as a result of Illness when a parent/carer has contacted school before 9.15am and has provided an acceptable reason for that absence.

When your child has exceeded this level of Absence you may be asked to provide the Head teacher with some further information, detail or evidence (sometimes in writing) that supports your view as a parent/carer that their child was ‘unfit’ to attend school.

***Note.***

*We would want parent/carers to be both clear in understanding and to appreciate that, if asked for some further information, detail or evidence, it does not mean that we do not believe you when they say your child is unwell, but, it does provide school with the necessary information and detail which supports the Head teachers decision to continue to Authorise some Absence should Governors, the LA and/or OfSTED review or question schools Registration Procedures and/or Attendance figures.*

The information provided can then be reviewed to consider if it would allow the Head teacher to continue to Authorise the Absence.

Any information or detail and any documentation provided by a parent/carer in support of their view that their child was ‘unfit’ to attend school may be recorded or filed in school to support the Head teachers agreement, or otherwise, to continue to Authorise any further Absence.

If, when asked for, a parent/carer does not or cannot provide further information, detail or evidence that Absence will remain Unauthorised.

School and parents/carers can work with the School Nurses Team and invite parents/carers/children to meet and discuss any unresolved issues.

**LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that, if it is medically appropriate/approved and possible they can work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would be recorded as being educated off site and would be equivalent to an Attendance at school.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Since September 2013 Head teachers are no longer Allowed to Authorise any ‘Leave of Absence’ (sometimes previously known as ‘term time holiday’) unless a parent/carer makes an application, in advance, detailing the ‘exceptional circumstances’ they would want the Head teacher to consider.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be authorised unless:

1. An application has been made in advance to the proprietor (Head teacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
2. The proprietor (Head teacher), or a person authorised by the proprietor, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

School consider six weeks to be an appropriate notice period that parents should give when requesting a planned leave of absence. Applications must be made on the official forms which can be provided by the school office and MUST be completed in full.

**Penalty Notices**

Parents/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices should their child take any Leave of Absence if they have not requested this, in writing, to the Head teacher (and/or completed a Leave of Absence Application) detailing the ‘exceptional circumstances’ they would want the Head teacher to take into consideration in deciding if any Leave of Absence can be agreed and Authorised.

Parent/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices should any Leave of Absence be taken without any Application/Request being made.

Parents/Carers should ensure that any Request/Application is made in advance (Six Weeks) of any Leave of Absence to be taken.

Parents/Carers should consider ensuring that they know if any Leave of Absence

requested can be Authorised by the Head teacher before planning, booking or

paying for any part of a Leave of Absence.

Legislation dictates that a Leave of Absence Requests/Application can only be

considered if it is from a Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally lives.

Leave of Absence Requests/Applications from a Parent/Carer that a pupil does not

normally live with or from any other family member cannot be considered under

any circumstances.

**ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

All pupils Attendance is monitored and reviewed on at least a weekly basis, but in some cases there may be a need or requirement for more frequent monitoring.

The school processes for supporting attendance are detailed in flowcharts in this documents. Attendance (Appendix 2) and Lateness ( Appendix 4)

**Addendum**

Children’s attendance in school has been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic in the United Kingdom. Over the academic year 2021-2022 school will be ‘returning to normal’ in terms of attendance procedures. However, school understands that given the current circumstances, attendance in school with fluctuate. School leaders are mindful of this and take this into consideration when applying this policy.

As a result, this policy will be reviewed again in December 2022.

Appendix 1 – Codes

**PRESENT**

/ Present (AM)

\Present (PM)

L Late (before registers closed)

**AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

C Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)

E Excluded (no alternative provision made)

F Extended family holiday (agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)

M Medical/Dental appointments

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)

U Late (after registers closed)

**APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY = PRESENT**

B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)

D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)

J Interview

P Approved sporting activity

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

**NOT COUNTED IN POSSIBLE ATTENDANCES**

X Non-compulsory school age absence

Y Enforced closure – whole school or partial

Z Pupil not yet on roll

# School closed to pupils

**Appendix 2 Flow Chart of attendance procedures**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **September** | * Letter 1 attendance letter for whole school |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Below 95%**  **From December**  **Below 90% up to Nov** | * Letter 2 sent home from Deputy expressing concerns * Medical Evidence required if absences are due to continued illness. Removal of I code without it. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Below 90%**  **If no improvements** | * Letter 3 sent home to arrange a meeting with Deputy/Head * Support offered within school |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Further absences**  **Referral** | * Referral made to Sandwell Attendance and Prosecution Service and support continued to offered in school. |

**Appendix 3**

**School Attendance**

**A very important message for all Parents/Carers**

Date Dear Parent/Carer,

St Margaret’s C E VA Primary School is working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

• do not achieve well in exams

• find it difficult to maintain friendships

• are more likely to become involved in crime

• miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

How does your child compare?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attendance during one school year | equals this number of days absent | Which is equal to this many weeks | which means this number of lessons missed |
| 95% | 9 days | 2 weeks | 50 lessons |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent’s legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Legal action that may be taken includes:

• **Issuing penalty notices**: Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

• **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence**: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

• **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence**: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.**

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child’s level of absence is of serious concern, the school will offer advice and support to improve attendance. After this, any unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

**Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.**

**Appendix 4**

**Flow Chart of Late procedures**

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| **Late to school on 7 occasions** | Decline begins -First letter sent home.  Removal of right to an L code |

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| --- | --- |
| **Continue to be late** | Continue to Decline -Second letter sent home reinforcing the severity of the number of lates. Outline what will happen next. |

**IMPROVEMENT SEEN LETTER SENT HOME**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No improvements** | **Continue to decline -**Third letter sent home. Referral to APS |

**IMPROVEMENT SEEN LETTER SENT HOME**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Improvements** | **Improvement seen -Continue to attend school on time for the whole term** |