

# St Margaret's CE Junior School



## Attendance Policy

**Policy Date: September 2020 (Updated January 2021)**

**Agreed by Governors: March 2021**

**Signed: Dr C Freeman (Chair of Governors) / Mr D Hugill (Headteacher)**

**Review date: September 2021**

**Principles:**

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

**The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement
- Key stage 2 pupils who miss up to 14 days of school are a quarter less likely to achieve age expected standard or above in reading, writing or maths than those with no absence

**School Responsibilities:**

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through our use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents/carers to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents/carers and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern

**Parents or Carers Responsibilities:**

- Work with school to address issues which may affect attendance

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly

- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day

Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances

- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them

### **Admissions Register:**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children)
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period **or** have been permanently excluded

### **Elective Home Education:**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

### **Attendance data and targets:**

Schools attendance for 2019-2020 was 90.7% which is above the county and national figures. **(See COVID-19 statement at the beginning of the policy)**

Our attendance target for 2020-2021 is 97%.

### **Definition of persistent absence:**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 10% or more of the amount of possible sessions across a given period.

### **School Procedures:**

School should be notified as soon as possible on the child's first day of absence. We will contact parents/carers by telephone if an absence is not reported

Registration times:

- Morning session – 9.00am

- Afternoon session – 1.00pm
- Children who arrive after 9.00am but before 9.30am will be given a late mark

Once registration closes at 9.30am children who arrive after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless prior notification is given e.g. doctors appointment

School encourages and recognises good attendance and punctuality and reports attendance data and policy and procedures to Governors.

- **The Local Authority is informed of the absence of any child who falls below 90% attendance.** We also report absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission
- School involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern
- School monitors attendance and punctuality for all pupils including vulnerable groups
- The school office will contact parents/carers if a pupil is unexpectedly absent. The bursar monitors attendance along with teaching staff and the headteacher
- School telephone number: 01782 973875. School email: office@st-margarets.staffs.sch.uk

Please try to avoid taking your child out of school wherever possible.

- Be punctual to ensure your child does not miss valuable learning at the start of the day
- Medical or dental appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible
- School follows government guidelines on leave of absence (or holidays) during term time. These can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Requests should be sent in writing to the Headteacher. Please include details of siblings who attend other schools
- We adhere to Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015.
- We follow Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. Please check their website for further details
- School uses Department for Education Guidance – Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers

### **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time**

From January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your Headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your Headteacher to the local authority.

### **Penalty Notice for persistent lateness**

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks (U) before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to **10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are

therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence (20 sessions) or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education). Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

The penalty is £60 (per child, per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 (per child, per parent) if paid within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority, not the school.

There is no requirement for attendance to be below a particular percentage before a Penalty Notice can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence.

Parents can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.

Parents will now only receive one warning notice period for improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all unauthorised absences from school and support head teachers in challenging parents who fail to meet their legal obligations. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

### **COVID-19**

The Coronavirus pandemic had an impact on school attendance during 2020 and 2021 as National restrictions led to school closures or partial closures. The DfE devised a coding system to help provide a picture of attendance without the impact of COVID. However, there may have been anomalies during the initial period in 2019-20.

### **New legislation, during this unprecedented period:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

**Legal Framework:**

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Education Act 2002 and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education Act 2005
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments
- The Education and Skills Act 2008
- The Equality Act 2010

**For further guidance please refer to the Department for Education document 'School Attendance: statutory guidance and departmental advice' October 2014**