

# St. Margaret's CE Junior School



## Attendance Policy

**Adopted under consultation: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024**

**Agreed by Governors: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**Signed by Governors to ratify on Governor Hub**

**Review date: October 2026**

## **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. We will also work with representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse, the Local Support Team or Education Welfare Workers 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:**

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

- Please try to avoid taking your child out of school wherever possible
- 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
- Work with school to address issues which may affect attendance
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their child's attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including quality 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 friendships
- Be punctual to ensure your child maximises all valuable learning

- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from your doctor (GP) if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with a particular 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

School telephone number: 01782 973875

School email: [office@st-margarets.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-margarets.staffs.sch.uk)

### **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 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
- 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 at the email address:

[electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk). This will include notification that the child will be removed 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**

The overall attendance for our school in 2023-24 was 96.0. This compares to an overall figure nationally of 92.8%.

We have set an attendance target of 97% for 2024-2025.

### **Definition of persistent absence**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 10% or more of the 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. doctor's appointment

School encourages and recognises good attendance and punctuality, reporting attendance data and policy and procedures to school Governors.

### School monitoring/reporting

- 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 sessions (5 days or more) without school's knowledge/permission
- School involve local agencies (Education welfare or 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 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 DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance,' issued on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.
- We follow the Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. Please check their website for further details
- School uses DfE 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 the 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 5 days unauthorised absence (10 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.

For a first offence the penalty is £80 (per child, per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £160 (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.

For a second offence, within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence, every new offence within the 3-year period will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. If the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child.

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 days 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.

## **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 DfE document  
'Working together to improve school attendance, August 2024.'**