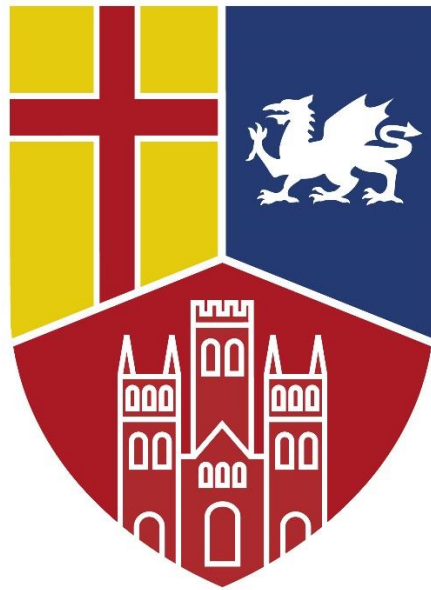


# **Attendance Policy**



**St Margaret's CE Primary School**

# Attendance Policy

## St Margaret's CE Primary School

### Document History Log:

<b>Author of document:</b>	Mrs Hassall	<b>Job role:</b>	Headteacher
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<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date of revision</b>	<b>Reason for revision</b>	<b>Resulting version number</b>	<b>Signatories</b>

## Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs Hassall	Head Teacher	0191 384 7331
	Senior Attendance Champion	
Mrs Bell	Other senior leaders with responsibility for attendance	0191 384 7331
	Governor with responsibility for attendance	

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: School Office, 0191 384 7331, [stmargarets@durhamlearning.net](mailto:stmargarets@durhamlearning.net), weduc.com

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs Hassall		0191 384 7331
Mrs Bell		0191 384 7331

### Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

### Children Missing from Education

If pupils whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

## **Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos**

St Margaret's CE Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### **The school day**

The school day is from 08.50 – 15.20 (EYFS & KS1) and 08.55-15.30 (KS2).

EYFS and KS1 children enter school through the gate into the infant playground. KS children enter through the main office gate. Gates open at 08.45 and close at 08.55.

Registration is 08.40 for KS1 and 08.55 for KS2. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 09.15 KS1 and 9.20 KS2.

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mrs Hassall if there are any issues which are affecting a pupils ability to attend school on time.

### **If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on Arbor.

### **If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

The school will send a letter home outlining the cause for concern regarding punctuality and an appointment will be made to discuss any barriers and how these can be overcome.

### **If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

A detailed discussion with the family will take place and specific strategies will be agreed upon in order to support attendance.

### **Term dates and planned Inset days**

Term dates are available on the school website: <https://www.st-margarets.durham.sch.uk/>

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form. Leave of absence forms can be downloaded from the school website. They should be completed and return to school.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.**

### **On the first day of absence**

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School (0191 384 7331 or [stmargarets@durhamlearning.net](mailto:stmargarets@durhamlearning.net) or [weduc.com](http://weduc.com)) providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home (via phone call or email) to find out why the pupil not in school.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

### **Periods of extended absence**

Where following health guidance such as a result of sickness there is no need for a parent to ring every day to explain the absence. However, for prolonged periods of illness where exclusion periods apply e.g. Chicken Pox contact is required as a minimum every 3 days.

### **No reason for absence provided**

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action. If no contact is made from home, a follow up phone call will be made, a home visit made be necessary or a welfare check may be carried out by the police if we are concerned about the welfare of the child (safeguarding concerns).

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Ways in which the school promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance

### **Attendance data**

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to relevant agencies and other professionals where necessary and it will be monitored by governors.

### **Absence concerns**

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

### **Persistent absence**

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with headteacher or deputy headteacher for a planning meeting. This will aim to discuss and address any issues which may be behind the persistent absence. Reminders will be given about the effect of persistent absence on a child and their well-being, including the amount of lost learning. Targets will be set for improved attendance. Parents will be informed that attendance will be closely monitored and may be invited to a follow up meeting. Including, where appropriate to wider support services (may be external to school) to identify and support with barriers to attendance

### **Severe absence**

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent

Meetings will be held with families to discussed as is the case with persistent absence, the local authority attendance team will be consulted to support and signpost to other agencies and to discuss whether more formal process are required.



## **National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention**

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

**Pupils with specific needs**

This Policy should account for the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts, This Policy must be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**This policy is supported by our policies on:**

Safeguarding, bullying and behaviour.

**The school and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.