

St. Margaret's C.E.



St. Margaret's C of E. Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed September 2017

Rationale

Education is a vital part of a child's development and as such the child's right to education should be protected. St Margaret's Primary School takes a strong line in this respect and relies on the support of parents to ensure that our attendance statistics are as high as possible.

All pupils have a right to education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, parents/carers may be breaking the law.

If the school has concerns about a pupil being absent or do not accept the explanation for an absence as genuine, the Headteacher or School Office staff will raise the matter with the Education Attendance Service.

Purpose

To ensure that all children at St Margaret's Primary School have access to the full provision of education without unnecessary or avoidable disruption through poor attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Expectations

From pupils:

- They will attend school regularly;
- They will arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day.

From parents:

- They encourage their children to attend school;
- They contact the office between 8.30am & 9.30am whenever their child is unable to attend;
- They ensure their child is appropriately dressed, adhering to the school uniform policy;
- They ensure their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day with homework completed;
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, that may be necessary.

Pupils and parents can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping;
- Contact from the school when a pupils fails to attend and no contact is made by parent/carer;
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend without good reason and there is a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness;
- Immediate action on any problem notified to us, in confidence if necessary;
- Positive measures to encourage good attendance;
- A high quality education.

Positive measures to encourage good attendance

- Registers are completed accurately twice each day (at 8.55am and at the start of the afternoon session).
- Daily monitoring by class teachers - contact made with the school administrator to raise concerns where appropriate.
- Regular monitoring by the Headteacher and School Administrator on attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance reviews and meetings with parents as required.
- Each child's attendance is reported to parents/carers at Parent Evening/Meetings with a grade awarded.
- 'Class Attendance Cup' - class with best weekly attendance awarded in assembly
- Annual class reward for the class who have had the best attendance in the school year
- Certificates to persistent absentees with most improved attendance
- '100% attendance club' - certificates and termly prizes for children with 100% attendance

Types of absence

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- **Authorised:** The school approves pupil absence

Examples of authorised absence:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Major religious observance
- External exams or educational assessments
- Visits to prospective new schools
- Approved sporting activity

- **Unauthorised:** The school will *not* approve pupil absence

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Holidays in term time
- Shopping
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late night
- Appointments/illness of other family members
- No reason given for absence.

The school is responsible for children's attendance and only the Headteacher can authorise absences.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on each day of the absence before 9.30am stating a reason. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

If contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents/carers then school will telephone to find out the reasons for absence. If telephone contact cannot be made then our Pastoral Leader may be asked to make a home visit on the first morning of absence. If no satisfactory reason for absence can be obtained, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We may alert the Oldham Council Attendance Officer to do a home visit.

Parents of children with attendance less than 95% are sent a letter from school requesting that they provide medical evidence to support subsequent absences. Failure to do so results in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. School works in conjunction with the Oldham Council Attendance Team who are authorized to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised term time absences of 10 sessions or more (please note that there are 2 sessions per day). If the Attendance Team become involved you may be requested to attend an Attendance Panel meeting, in school, with them, the Headteacher and our Attendance Officer.

Family holidays during term time

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for subsequent lessons on their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement.

Family holidays should be planned during the school holidays. Holidays in term time cannot be considered to be authorised absences, so they will always be unauthorised absences unless the Headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant leave.

In accordance with the Local Authority Attendance Policy, parents will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice fine for holidays of 5 days or more.

Please be aware that leave of absence of 20 days or more will result in your child losing their place in school.

Religious observances

Schools should be aware that staff, pupils and their families could be involved with religious observation, celebrations or commemorations in their communities.

On some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods, weekends or closure days and this necessitates consideration of special leave for religious observance for children and families practising that particular faith.

In the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting unauthorised absence, no more than 1 day is permitted for any individual occasion and no more than 2 days per academic year, to enable children and their families to observe their main religious festivals. Examples of these are Eid, Diwali, Indian or Chinese New Year and Passover.

There is no entitlement to time off in lieu for observances that fall on a weekend or a non-school day.

Lateness

School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Children arriving between 9.00am-9.15am will be recorded as L (late). Children arriving after 9.15am, when registers close, will be recorded as U (unauthorised late). 10 unauthorised lates in a 12 week period may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Oldham Council Attendance Service.

Any child arriving later than 8.55am should be accompanied by an adult to the School Office so they can be registered on the fire register. The parent / carer should give a reason for the lateness and sign the register. The School Office staff will then send the child to their classroom.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern the following escalation of action will be taken.

1. Letter home with details of lates recorded.
2. Referral to the Oldham Council Attendance Service.

Late marks adversely affect your child's overall attendance figure and lesson time missed.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments can adversely affect a child's attendance, therefore wherever possible non-urgent medical appointments such as routine optician/dentist/doctors appointments should be made outside of school hours. If the appointment must take place during the school day e.g. hospital appointment, you will need to hand a copy of the letter into the school office. Children attending urgent appointments should not stay off school for the whole day, unless absolutely necessary.

We are only able to authorise half a day for medical appointments.

Monitoring of pupil attendance

Attendance statistics are generated at least weekly and parents will be notified by letter if their child's attendance is causing concern. We judge attendance levels as:

<u>Attendance during the School Year</u>	
95% +	<p>Well done!! Your child has good attendance.</p> <p>Thank you for your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and on time.</p>
90% - 95%	<p>You are nearly there!!</p> <p>If there is anything that school can do to support you with your child's attendance please let us know.</p>
85% - 90%	<p>Your child is missing between 4 - 6 weeks of school over the year and is at risk of under achievement.</p> <p>Your child is classed as a persistent absentee. We will be working with you to help improve your child's attendance next year.</p> <p>If there is anything that school can do to support you with your child's attendance please let us know.</p>
Less than 85%	<p>Your child is missing between 8 - 13.5 weeks of school over the year and is seriously at risk of under achievement.</p> <p>Your child is classed as a persistent absentee and you are at risk of being issued with a fixed penalty notice. We will be working with you to help improve your child's attendance next year.</p> <p>If there is anything that school can do to support you with your child's attendance please let us know.</p>

Attendance statistics which are consistently below 95% will result in parents being requested to provide further explanations about their child's attendance. Where children continue to have attendance of less than 95%, then authorisation for sickness will require medical evidence for each absence.

In cases where the Headteacher/School Attendance Office has concerns about a pupil's absence rate the Oldham Council Attendance Officer will be notified of that child's name and attendance.

Attendance of 90% or less is defined as Persistent Absence in line with the DFE definition.

What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is absent.
- Try to make non urgent appointments outside of school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school you should...

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school to see if there is any support that can be provided in helping your child's attendance to improve.
- The school may refer to the Attendance Service at Oldham Council.

You may contact the Attendance Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation. (Telephone number available from the School Office).

Responsibility

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority.

Ways to report your child's absence

School email: .info@stmargarets.oldham.sch.uk

School telephone: 0161 770 5900

Conclusion

A child's education can be adversely affected by poor attendance. At St Margaret's Primary School we place great emphasis on good attendance as a positive step in helping children to have full access to the curriculum and achieve their potential

