

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. **When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55am** and the afternoon register at **1pm** for EYFS, **1.15pm** for KS2 and at **1.30pm** for KS1.

2. **What happens if my child is late?**

- Registration finishes 15 minutes after the start of a school session.
- If your child arrives in that 15 minutes (by 9.10am in a morning) he/she will be marked **late**.
- If your child arrives after the 15 minutes (after 9.10 am in a morning) he/she will be marked as **an unauthorised absence**.

3. **Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence, before 9.30am preferably. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- ✓ Day of religious observance
- ✓ Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. **What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. **Will the School contact me if my child is absent?**

We will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. On returning to school we will require a letter explaining the reason for the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. **I would like my child to have leave of absence for a supervised educational activity. What should I do?**

The Headteacher can approve educational activities, such as a sporting or music event (and this approval is implicit where the school has been involved in making the arrangements). A request must be made in writing explaining the circumstances of the request. In considering the request the school will consider:

- i. The nature of the activity;
- ii. The benefits to the pupil;

- iii. The effect on the child's general education;
- iv. The amount of time requested;
- v. The timing of the activity.

The pupil must be supervised in the activity by someone authorised to do so by the school. They must have the necessary skills, training, experience and knowledge to make the activity a successful, worthwhile and safe experience for the pupil.

7. I would like to apply for leave of absence for a family holiday. What should I do?

The 'Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006' were updated in September 2013 and removed wording that, 'the Headteacher of the school may grant up to ten school days leave of absence in any school year, for a family holiday, if she believes that the circumstances warrant it'. From September 2013 the Headteacher will not be able to approve absence for a family **holiday unless there are very exceptional circumstances**. Any application must be made on the appropriate form, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday and must clearly state the exceptional circumstances.

If a pupil fails to return from holiday within 10 days of the agreed return date (and the failure is not due to sickness), his/her name may be taken off the register. Staff will not provide pupils with work to take away with them or to catch up' on their return to school.

St Margaret's School will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota (Evidence is needed).

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

The Headteacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. She will take into account the child's age, previous attendance record, their ability to catch up and the timing within the school year (The beginning of a school year is never a good time for a child to be absent). **She will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS**

Parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.

8. I would like to apply for Exceptional Extended Leave of Absence. What should I do?

With the exception of family holidays and employment, schools have a discretionary power to grant a pupil time off school if they believe there is extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify leave. All applications must be made in writing and in advance by the parents. The Headteacher has the power to refuse the whole period requested by the parents, grant part of the period and refuse the remainder, or grant the whole of the period requested. Any leave of absence granted by the school is recorded as authorised.

At St Margaret's School all requests are treated on a case by case basis and will take into account:

- The amount of time requested;
- The age of the pupil;
- The pupil's general absence / attendance record;
- Proximity to SATs;
- Length of the proposed leave;
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work;
- Pupil's educational needs;
- General welfare of the pupil;
- Circumstances of the request;
- Purpose of the leave;
- Frequency of the activity;
- When the request was made.

Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil either attends an alternative school or undertakes school work set during this period.

The Headteacher will respond to all requests for extended leave of absence in writing and give her reasons for the decision. If the application is granted the Headteacher will state the expected date of return and what action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected. Similarly, a letter refusing a request will explain the reasons for the refusal and what actions will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away. (In both cases unless the child is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, after 10 school days they will be removed from the register and the local authority informed.)

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

10. My child is reluctant go to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons - difficulties with school work, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

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REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Please note that in accordance with "The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006", which were updated in September 2013:-

- ◆ Leave of absence may only be granted by the Head Teacher of the school.
- ◆ There is **no entitlement to leave of absence from school, which may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.** (All applications will be carefully considered on their merits in the light of the need to maintain continuity of learning).
- ◆ **Leave of absence can no longer be approved for a family holiday, unless there are very exceptional circumstances.**
- ◆ If a pupil fails to return from leave of absence within ten school days of the agreed date of return (and the failure is not due to sickness or an unavoidable delay), his/her name will be taken off the register.
- ◆ Staff cannot provide children with work to 'catch up' on their return to school.

Further information can be found in, 'Attendance Policy – A Guide for Parents', which is available from the school office and on the school website.

(a) Application

I wish to apply for leave of absence for my child(ren):

_____ (names)

from _____ to _____

State reason for the request, clearly explaining the exceptional circumstances:

Signed _____ (parent/guardian)

(b) Reply to parent

Request for _____ to have leave of absence

from _____ to _____

The above request **has** been authorised.

OR The above request **has not** been authorised because: _____

Signed _____ (Headteacher)

Date _____