



Aims/Expectations

Attendance and punctuality are important for St. Margaret's C of E Primary School as we believe this plays a key role in raising overall pupil attainment. Good attendance and punctuality are clearly linked to children making good progress in their learning. It ensures children settle into school and experience the stability and security they need to achieve their best.

- Children should be in school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless ill or attending a medical appointment.
- *The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible for their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents/carers are asked to help the school to help their child to get the best out of the education available to them, and enable them to reach their full potential.*

Attendance Officer support:

Support is available to discuss individual issues and to offer parents and carers support as appropriate.

Attendance

If a child's attendance gives concern, the school will write to parents or carers (see appendix 1) and invite them to a meeting to discuss attendance issues and the importance of this being overcome. Where poor attendance continues, the school may contact the Education Welfare Office.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised – where the school approves pupil absence

Unauthorised – where the school will not approve absence

Illness:

If a child is absent due to illness, parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence by 9:30am. This will be recorded as 'authorised absence'. If we do not receive a reason for the absence, this will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence'. Absence of 5 days or more should be supported by medical evidence.

Attendance (cont):

Medical Appointments:

Please try to arrange these after school, at lunchtimes or in the holidays. Where an appointment time is unavoidable, please inform the school in advance of the appointment. Always report to the School Office when collecting your child and sign the pupil 'Signing In or Out Book' on leaving the school and on your return.

Request for Leave of Absence

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. A pupil's absence during term time can seriously damage their learning, with a consequent risk of underachievement, which we, and you, must seek to avoid.

If a parent/carer chooses to take their child out of school, a 'leave of absence form' should be requested in person from the office. An information sheet will be given explaining why it is important not to take your child out of school during term time except for exceptional circumstances. (See appendix 2)

- The Genesis Education Trust is committed to a policy of minimum absence during term time and therefore we can only grant 'leave of absence' in 'exceptional circumstances.' (e.g. death of a close relative). Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- Leave for holidays during term time will not be approved and will be deemed as 'unauthorised absence.'
- Schools may remove from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 days of the agreed date. (See CME summary overleaf.)

The Educational Welfare Service:

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) work with parents or carers, children and schools to improve school attendance and punctuality. If a child's attendance gives concern, the EWO will contact the parents or carers and may make a home visit or arrange a meeting at the school or the office. Continued issues of poor attendance or punctuality may result in court action under the Education Act 1996.

Punctuality/Lateness:

St Margaret's doors open at 8:30am. Registers are completed promptly at 8:45 and sent to the school office. If a child arrives late they will receive a late mark. Parents should report to the office with the child to sign in the late book. An explanation should be given for lateness, preferably by the parent/carer.

Where a pattern of lateness develops a letter will be sent (appendix 3) inviting parents/carers to a meeting to resolve punctuality issues. If this does not resolve the issue, the Educational Welfare Service will be asked to discuss the school's concerns with the parents. This process can lead to court action.

Appendix 1: Attendance at School Example Letter

I am writing regarding your child's attendance. Since the start of the school year, your child's attendance is causing concern as it is only at%.

This percentage may include any authorised or unauthorised absences, e.g. holiday or medical absences.

Poor attendance means that your child is missing out a vital part of their education and school life. I ask for your full co-operation in this matter by ensuring that your child's attendance improves significantly.

To support you in this matter, I would like to meet with you to discuss the reasons for absence and how to ensure that your child's attendance improves. Please contact me within 5 working days to confirm when you are able to meet me.

Please support us in our drive to improve attendance. **See appendix 5 to identify who the letter will from.**

Children Missing Education (CME)

The schools follow and implement children **missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities** September **2016** (Reference: DFE-00214-2016 – to be reviewed September 2019).

- The school will notify the local authority if we are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations¹ (Annex A).

- When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority will include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Annex A).

- The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), subparagraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (see Annex A).

- The school will notify the local authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification will include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.

Appendix 3: Late Arrival at School Example Letter I am writing to inform you that your child class has been frequently arriving late to school. During the period of to your child was late on occasions.

Children arriving late to St. Margaret's C of E Primary School miss a vital part of the school day and valuable learning time. By arriving late children not only cause disruption to the rest of the class but can find it very unsettling and disconcerting for themselves.

The Education Act 1996 states that you are responsible for your child's attendance and punctuality. Please help us to help your child to get the best out of the education available to them, and enable them to reach their full potential by ensuring your child arrives at school on time and is in the class line ready to begin the school day.

I would like to meet with you to discuss the reasons for lateness. Please contact the school office to confirm your availability within 5 working days.

Appendix 2: Information for Parents and Carers: Before requesting 'leave of absence' during term time we ask you to reflect upon the information below.

- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, you as the parent/ carer are responsible for ensuring that your child receives full time education.
- A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are absent, they are also less prepared for the teaching which builds upon prior learning after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement.
- Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time, both educationally and socially. It is difficult to catch up on work later. • Regular school attendance is a stepping-stone for greater academic achievement. Setting a good attendance pattern from the start is essential for a pupil to obtain a good education and open awareness for a successful future.
- If after reading this information, you still choose to request 'leave of absence' during term time, please complete a 'request for leave of absence form' and return it to the school office.
- Leave during term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and all requests will be dealt with on an individual basis. Leave for holidays during term time will not be approved and will be deemed as 'unauthorised absence.'
- You will receive a letter from the school, stating whether the leave of absence has been granted and if so this is deemed to be 'authorised absence'.
- If your application is rejected and you decide to take your child away this will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and is referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Appendix 4: Late Collection Example Letter

I am writing to inform you that your child class has been collected late from school on occasions.

These late collections occurred during the period of to Please ensure your child is collected promptly at the end of the school day. It can cause upset to your child if he/she is left beyond the end of the school day.

If your child has not been collected by 4pm, the school is legally bound to contact Social Services. The Education Act 1996 states that you are responsible for your child's attendance and punctuality.

Please help us to help your child to get the best out of the education available to them, and enable them to reach their full potential.

Appendix 5: Attendance flow chart of action to be taken

**All percentages are based on the Academic year's calculation. This ensures a more accurate picture.*

Day 1 of absence when a call of absence has not been received

☛ **95% or more or Below 90% and not vulnerable:** call home and send a letter by post on that day outlining concern.

Day 1 of absence when a call of absence has not been received

☛ **Below 90% and vulnerable:** home visit to discuss child not at home, put a letter in the letter box stating the parents need to contact the school by the end of the day to confirm reason for absence. Also, immediately speak to EWO to identify next steps. Follow all guidance from EWO, raising whether this should be referred to social services.

**If communication is received from parents – at any stage of the process – the steps will not be taken any further*



Day 2-4 of absence when a call of absence has still not been received.



95% or more or Below 90% and not vulnerable call home each day until contact has been made.

Day 2-5 of absence when a call of absence has not been received



Below 95% and vulnerable If vulnerable child below 90% is still not in school, contact EWO on a daily basis, until contact has been made, discussing each day whether a home visit, child protection referral or child missing from education referral needs to be made.



Day 5 of absence when a call of absence has still not been received.



On day 5 of absence, contact EWO to make a home visit and to make a decision as to whether a missing from education referral should be made.

- 90-94% Concern letter 1 inviting parent/carer to meet with Deputy Head.

Attendance letter thresholds

- 85-89% Concern letter 2 inviting parent/carer to meet with Head of School. The meeting to identify reasons for absence, review of absence for the rolling and academic year. Educational Welfare Officer to be informed and the child discussed.
- 84% or lower Concern letter 3 inviting parent/carer to meet with Head of School or Executive Headteacher. The meeting to identify reasons for absence, review of absence for the rolling and academic year. Educational Welfare Officer to attend the meeting. Head of School to decide whether a referral should be made to social services.