



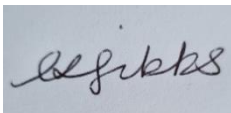
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Signed:  (Chair of Governors)

Val Male

Signed:  (Headteacher)

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Margaret Wix Primary School and Nursery

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Introduction

At Margaret Wix, we expect all children to attend school on time, every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. Good attendance is considered 97% or better.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present during the school day. The register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school have received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- Medical appointment absences will only be authorised with supporting evidence in the form of appointment letters ahead of the planned absence (although parents are strongly encouraged to arrange these outside of school hours).

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent or guardian.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the

school will then contact the Attendance Improvement Officer, who will write to parents or visit the home of the family to ensure the parents or guardians fully understand the seriousness of the situation.

Registration

Classroom doors open at 8.40 am. Registers will be called when the children enter the classroom at 8:45 am and 1:00 pm. The registers will be closed at 8:50 am and 1:05 pm.

Lateness

Classroom doors close at 8.45am and children arriving after this time will need to sign in at the office. Children who arrive after the register is closed will be marked absent.

Monitoring attendance and responding to absence

- Registers are called by the teaching staff in the classroom.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child the office must be notified. The school will then contact the parent or guardian straight away.
- Children marked absent are identified and messages checked to ensure the school has been informed.
- Unexplained absences are identified.
- SMS text messages are sent.
- A telephone call is made to all children whose absence is not explained.
- On some occasions, when attendance is already a concern and school has had no communication, door step visit can be made from day one.

Response to poor attendance

Where a child's absence is a cause for concern the school will carefully monitor and respond to the concern in order to achieve an improvement.

- Children whose attendance drop below 90% and/or have absences which are unauthorised, the parents/carers will receive an email expressing concerns and offering support. Appropriate short term intervention is planned, which may include working with the parent and child.
- If there is no improvement, a meeting will be arranged with the Attendance Improvement Officer. Parents will be informed that a penalty fine may be imposed if the child has 10 unauthorised absences in the current or previous term. These absences do not have to be consecutive.

1. After 8 unauthorised absences a warning letter could be sent to parents informing them of their risk of fine. A meeting between the parent and Assistant Head/Headteacher aims to resolve attendance concerns.
2. If a child has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence, the Governors, supported by the local authority, reserve the right to take legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. A penalty fine of £80 per parent and per child applies, rising to £160 per parent per child if this is not paid within 21 days. Prosecution may follow if fines are not paid.

Medical absence may not always be authorised. Medical evidence will be asked for in order to authorise the absence. This evidence must be in written form/screenshot from medical professionals ahead of the absence.

Response to poor punctuality

Children arriving between 8:50 am and 9:00 am are recorded as late. The registers close at 8:50 am.

- Regular reminders to all parents are given about the importance of being on time at 8:40 am.
- A record of names of children arriving late is kept on the school system.
- This is reviewed at the end of each half term and if the child is regularly late a review meeting with parents is arranged.

Requests for leave of absence and holidays in term time

Children need to be in school for all sessions, so they can make the best progress possible, for this reason we rarely authorise any additional absence. If there is an exceptional circumstance where a child needs to be absent from school a parent must complete the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form at least a week in advance of the absence.

No holidays will be approved during term time for any reason. Children who take holidays without permission may be removed from the school register.

If a pupil granted leave fails to return within 10 days of the agreed date and the Headteacher has not agreed that there is an unavoidable reason for the non-attendance, the child's name will be removed from the school register and the parents will have to apply for re-admission.

Governors authorise the Headteacher to exercise her discretion to issue fixed penalty fines of £80 for children with unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more within the current or previous term.

Long term absence

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will do all it can to send learning material home, so they can keep up with their school work if they are able to, if the child is able to do so.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services, so arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside of school.

Children Absent from Education

- A child being absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff members must follow the Child Protection Policy if they have any concerns.
- Children who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are vulnerable and at potential risk of abuse or neglect. Staff members should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who are absent/go missing, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.
- We will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE September 2016).
- Where child sexual exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected, staff should log their concerns and pass onto the designated members of staff for child protection.
- If the child already has an allocated social worker, the DSL must contact them (or their team manager) to discuss any concerns.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Section 12 requires schools to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance (as identified by the school), or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

Encouraging good attendance

- Staff and governors will set an encouraging ethos through a culture of praise.
- Children and class groups will be praised for good attendance and punctuality.
- The importance of good attendance will be regularly emphasised to parents in newsletters, assemblies and meetings.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to identify patterns, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform provision and policy.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request regular updates from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will examine information provided to them and ensure attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep attendance records on file for a minimum of three years while children are on role.

Rates of attendance are reported in the school data dashboard.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and following up absences in the appropriate way. If they have a concern they will speak to the school office, who will then contact the parents or guardians. If a meeting is required parents or guardians will meet with the Headteacher.