

# St. Margaret's at Hasbury C of E Primary School (SMAHPS)

## Attendance Policy 2023

<p><b><u>Attendance Policy</u></b>  <b><u>Responsibility for monitoring this policy:</u></b>          Sara Shepherd  <i>(Reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or operating procedures)</i></p>			
Date	Reviewed by	Role	Date Approved by Governors
September 2023	S Shepherd	Headteacher	October 2023

## **Attendance Policy**

### **School Vision**

Through our Christian Faith, we acknowledge our responsibility to all, to enrich lives and show love and respect within our school and the community. We believe in educating the whole child. We cherish everyone and encourage everyone to treat each other as unique individuals. We want the children of St Margaret's at Hasbury CE Primary School to be caring and respectful towards one another; learn to be confident and courageous in the face of challenges; be the best they can be and:

**'Live life in all its Fullness' (John 10:10)**

### **Policy Rationale**

In developing this policy St Margaret's recognises our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Rights Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At St Margaret's we strongly believe that attendance and punctuality are vital for all children to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community. We welcome children of all abilities and disabilities and we are inclusive of different faiths and backgrounds.

St Margaret's provide a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where children want to be and are ready and eager to learn. This is the foundation for securing good attendance in school. To ensure good attendance the school work with children, parents and other partners to remove barriers to attendance by building trusting relationships and working together to provide the right support at the right time. We recognise how good attendance links into wider school improvement efforts in order to build a culture of good attendance. We work closely with parents of children with additional needs and disabilities to make reasonable adjustments to support attendance.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to equip our children for life and potentially have an impact upon their futures as employees and employers.

Children need to attend school every day, as we believe that:

- prolonged and consistent absence affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on attainment and progress. It has been found that children with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school
- good attendance and punctuality will support well-being, wider life chances and help to ensure that children flourish.

Children should only miss school if:

- they are too ill to attend
- they have got advance permission from the school

The DfE documentation '*Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier*' states that;

“The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. The children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge.”

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. The Government has stated that once a child's attendance figure falls to 90% they are classed as *persistently absent*.

Good attendance at school makes a difference to a child's education. There is clear evidence that if children get into bad habits at primary school, then they will continue them at

### **The Law relating to Attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important and The Law**

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a full time-education. Section 444 1(a) of the Education Act 1966 says, "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his (her) parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted". Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year. Any exceptions to this can only be taken with the full agreement of the Headteacher

### **The Law relating to safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

All staff at St Margaret's are aware that "Safeguarding is everyone's business". Ofsted under Section 5, make judgements in relation to the effectiveness of Safeguarding. St Margaret's recognises its legal duty under Section 157 and 175 of The Education Act 2002, to work together with other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our school's Child Protection Policy takes into account the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Working Together to Improve School Attendance September 2022 and is reviewed annually, all staff are aware of their responsibilities to inform the designated safeguarding officer and the Local Authority of children who are persistently absent or missing or any children they intend to remove from the school's roll.

The member of staff responsible for attendance in school is Mrs S Shepherd (Headteacher). Please contact the school office if you wish to speak to somebody about attendance.

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

### **Working together to improve attendance**

At St Margaret's we recognise that removing barriers to attendance requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with families. We work together to:

- expect good attendance – we aspire to high standards of attendance and punctuality for our children and we have a culture where children want to be in school and ready to learn.
- monitor attendance and punctuality – we rigorously monitor attendance data to identify patterns so that we can work together as soon as possible to resolve concerns before they become entrenched.  
listen and understand – we identify patterns and discuss these with children and parents in order to listen and understand attendance barriers and agree how to work together to remove them.
- facilitate support – we remove barriers in school and help children and parents to access support to overcome barriers outside of school.
- formalise support – we work with our partners to explain the consequences of poor attendance where absence persists and voluntary support is not working. Additional support may include working with the Local Authority to formalise support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
- enforce – we enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect our children's right to an education where support is not working or parents are not engaging.

## **Promoting good attendance**

At St Margaret's we promote good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Attendance is published on the school website
- Attendance figures are reported to parents annually via the child's report.
- We have clear communication with pupils and parents about the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- We work in partnership with the Education Support Service (ESS) to communicate to parents their legal obligations and the consequences of condoned absence.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To arrive at school between 8.45 and 8.55am.
- To attend registration promptly for both morning and afternoon registration

### **Parents/Carer**

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit state to learn
- To notify the school every day of absence by 9.00am
- To provide written explanation of absences on the first day a pupil returns to school
- To take family holidays in the school holiday period
- To provide the school with **two** up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility. If contact details change then we must be informed of new details within 24 hours

### **Teachers**

- To keep an accurate attendance register
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance
- To take appropriate action when pupils are late
- To monitor pupil absence
- To inform a member of SLT when absence is impacting on achievement

### **SLT**

- To have a named member of SLT responsible for attendance
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self-review
- To intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- Develop a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance agenda

### **Office**

- To monitor late entrants into school and adjust Integrin accordingly
- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences, which are recorded straight onto Integrin and/or CPOMs
- To telephone the parent or carer of any child that is absent from school, where the school has not been notified. Refer to 'First Day Calling procedures in the appendices.
- To monitor register coding and alert staff of inconsistencies

- To produce individual or class summary sheets upon request of the Education Support Service (ESS)
- On the advice of the Headteacher the office will refer to the Education Support Service (ESS) any children that have met the referral criteria
- To produce attendance figures for end of year reports

## Attendance and Illness

### Absence Procedures

If a child is ill the first action to be taken is to call the school office or report the absence on school life (sch.life, not emails through info) the school as early as possible (and before 9.00am) and let the school office know the child will not be in school – **01384 818660**.

Absences can also be reported to [info@hasbury.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:info@hasbury.dudley.sch.uk).

This needs to be done **every day** of absence, not just the first day of absence (*unless a child is admitted to hospital, or has a long term illness-related absence for a period of time – in this instance you do not need to ring every day*).

If a child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by 9.00am one of our office staff will call parents/carers to find out why the child is not in school.

Unexplained absence will be unauthorised. However, if a child is absent and evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary are provided, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

### First day calling procedures

St Margaret's have a first day calling procedure which we follow when a child is absent from school and parents have not provided a reason for an absence.

### Procedures

- Class teachers undertake statutory registration at 8.55am and 1.00pm each day and update the electronic registers in accordance with guidance given.
- The parents are expected to telephone or contact school by 9.00am on the first day of absence. Parents are regularly reminded of this. The admin officer will make telephone contact with the parent of children for which the school does not know the reason for the absence. This will be done as soon as possible after 9.15am
- All absent children for whom there is not a known reason will be contacted

The admin officer will keep records of any persistent or repeated unreported absences or lateness. If this causes the concerns the Headteacher will liaise with the DHT (Attendance Officer)

### Series Case Reviews

When a child dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, a review conducted to identify ways in which professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together to safeguard children and prevent similar incidents from occurring.

By following our robust first day contact procedures, risk of harm to children should be minimised.

School will ensure

- All parents/carers contacts are up to date (at least two)
- Parents are aware of school's first day contact procedures

(See Appendix 2)

### **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.

### **Contact school if your child has low attendance**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support Officer (ESO) from the Local Authority. The ESO will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, they can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the ESO themselves to ask for advice and information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice, in accordance with their statutory duties. Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The DfES have stated that;

“Arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as an unauthorised absence.”

The pupil registrations Act 2008 states that it is the duty of the parent to ensure their child/children arrive on time for school.

### **How we manage lateness**

At St Margaret's we expect children to arrive at school between 8.45am - 8.55am. Children who arrive after the registration period (8.45am – 8.55am) but prior to the register being closed are recorded as L (late before registers closed), statistical meaning – present.

Children who arrive after the register is closed (arriving after 9.15am), are recorded as U (late after registers closed), statistical meaning – Unauthorised absence as the DfES have stated that:

'Arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.'

If your child arrives after 8.55am they will need to be signed in at the main school office **by a parent/carer, or adult and a reason for the lateness must be given.**

### **Medical Appointments**

The school request that medical appointments are taken outside of the school day where possible. However, if your child has a medical appointment, you must contact the school prior to the appointment to ask for approved arrangements for your child to be collected/returned to school as close to the appointment time as possible. School will ask to see a copy of the appointment time/letter. School may not authorise the absence unless they have seen a copy of the letter/appointment card **before** the appointment.

If a child is late due to a doctors/medical appointment they will be marked as 'M' which does not class as a late mark.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Should school be unable to resolve an ongoing lateness issue we reserve the right to bring forward the close of register. This would mean that your child's lateness would be recorded as unauthorised which could result in the Local Authority considering enforcement proceedings against you. **We will always inform you in writing should this action be necessary.**

Absence from individual lessons – should your child be present for registration but then fail to attend subsequent lessons (without permission) school reserve the right to amend the register code for that school session to unauthorised to reflect lesson absence. In the event of this happening parents would be notified by telephone and/or a letter by 1<sup>st</sup> class post on the same school day.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.



Where attendance falls below 95% the school will write to parents to inform them of their child's attendance figure and to indicate how the loss of learning may impact their child if low attendance continues over the year.

Any child in St Margaret's who is identified as having **attendance below 90%** will have all further absence **unauthorised** on the school's register, unless medical evidence of appointments etc. is provided. Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absenteeism.

Where attendance continues to remain a concern a member of staff from school will contact the parents and invite them to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance.

### **Pupils at risk of persistent absence**

St Margaret's will initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures. This includes:

- letters home
  - attendance clinics
  - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
  - work with families and the community to identify effective methods of communication and recognise and overcome potential barriers to reaching families.
  - carry out home visits to children who have attendance below 90% on days when they are off sick, even when a parent/carer has contacted the school to provide a reason for their child's absence.
  - consideration of whether further interventions are required (see additional intervention information below)
- provide regular updates to leaders and teachers on at-risk children
  - provide regular updates to the local authority attendance team and ESS to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils.

### **Holidays in term time/Leave of absence**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday** and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) The proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations, St Margaret's CE Primary School will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least 21 school days prior to the requested leave date.

**Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing.** A general guide for parents, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual thirteen-week holiday time would not be authorised.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on the school's register.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 days notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

#### **Penalty Notice Fines issued by the Local Authority**

The Education Support Service at the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice Fine of up to £120 (per parent/per child) or instigate legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court in the following circumstances:

- Where an excluded child is identified in a public place in the first 6 days of an exclusion.
- Where a Formal Warning Notice has previously been issued regarding unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence is accrued.
- Where there is recorded unauthorised term time leave of absence/holiday leave.

Further information regarding Penalty Notice Fines and other enforcement proceedings relating to school attendance can be obtained from the Education Support Service (01384 813417).

#### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)/Persistent Lateness (PL), Severe Absenteeism (SA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. Children whose attendance falls below 50% are deemed to be severely absent.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA or PL mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Pupils whose

attendance falls below 90% will receive a home visit from a member of the senior leadership team on days where a parent or carer has contacted the school to advise us that their child will be absent.

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to children fulfilling their potential.

### **Children missing in education**

If any pupil has 10 consecutive school days of absence and school have undertaken their own enquiries and it is established that the child is missing from education a referral to the ESS will be made, who will then undertake their own enquiries in trying to establish the child's whereabouts. The ESS will then agree with school when to remove the pupil/s name from school roll, under Regulation 8 of the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006. The Regulations state that if the child has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and at no time was his absence authorised, school have no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unlikely to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and both the school and the ESS have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is then ESS can agree for the school to remove the pupil from roll.

### **Home educated children**

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be in school. On receipt of written notification to home educate from parents, school will inform the local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register.

### **Legal Interventions**

St Margaret's are committed to working with children, parents and other partners to make use of the full range of legal interventions available to improve attendance and punctuality. In discussion with the Local Authority, we consider the level of intervention required after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These include:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notice

Review Date: Autumn 2024

Ratified by

Signed by:

Head teacher

Chair of Governors

## APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances

#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
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## Appendix 2 – First day absence procedures

### Absence Procedures 2023

Class registers completed and saved (9.00am)

Late children added to the electronic register from inventory/walkie talkie notification

Absences reviewed by school office staff (by 9.15am)

Phone calls made to first contact on emergency list for any children where no reason is known (by 9.30am)

No reply on first contact number so further calls made (refer to child's list of contacts) to check there has been any contact from within the family home.

Ensure Sara Shepherd (Louisa Hill in her absence) receives the list of absences with notes by 11am

No phone call by 12.00pm, DSLs carry out a safe and well home visit. If no reply, DSLs leave a 'Home Visit' form.

Sara Shepherd (Louisa Hill in her absence) ring the contacts leaving a message if there is no answer. Family are given a deadline of 12.00pm to notify school of their child's absence.

If child/children are on Early Help, CIN, CP, DSLs to contact the agencies and agree a further action. Further action might include police.

If child/children are not on Early Help, CIN, CP, school office to continue to call emergency number throughout the afternoon.

3.15pm deadline. DSLs carry out further home visit

No contact made  
Contact police to initiate a safe and well check using IOI.  
Submit a MARF

Contact made: annotate first day for. Pass to HT (DHT) in her absence