



# **St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Community Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**To be read in conjunction with Attendance Policy  
Addendum for 2020-2021 Academic year (page 22)**

**Date: September 2020**

**Reviewed and Ratified By: Governing body on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**

**Review Date: September 2021**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Executive Headteacher**



## Statement of Intent

St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School .

## Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent and daily thereafter for the duration of the absence. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:45am. All pupils who arrive late must report, **with their parent** to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## The Role of the School Staff

At St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher may notify the School Secretary of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the School Secretary to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

## **Rewards for Good Attendance**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, unless exceptional circumstances occur.

## **Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance**

From the end of Term 2, the following action will be taken for low attendance:-

- 90 - 96% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents – consider Penalty Notice or Early Help Notification.
- Below 90% - Where the absences have not been authorised consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer and a referral to PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service may be considered.

## **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

## **Lateness**

At St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School the register is taken at 8:45am and 1:05pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:15am and 1:35pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

**Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 as revised in April 2017, when:**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions will result in a Penalty Notice Warning Letter being issued.

- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence (which includes arriving after the register has closed) is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher, using a consistent approach, can authorise absence. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head Teachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings must be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

**Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

**Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance - Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017**

A Penalty Notice can only be issued :-

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

**Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**

**Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**

**Appendix 3 Absence Letter**

**Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**

**Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**

**Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 7a Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 7b Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 8 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken**

**Appendix 10 Traveller Attendance letter**

**Appendix 11 Traveller Absence due to travelling**

**Appendix 12 School Referral Pathway**



## Appendix 1

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates\_of\_lates\_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total\_lates\_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at 8:45am and at 1:05pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 2

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates\_of\_lates\_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total\_lates\_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at 8:45am and is closed at 9:15am for the morning session and taken again at 1:05pm and closed at 1:35pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 3

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 4

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname»**

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage\_attendance»% which means «he\_she» has missed «total\_authorized\_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

??

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher  
The School

## Appendix 5

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «**salutation**»

Re «**forename**» «**surname**»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

*‘As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.’* A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

*On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.*

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 6

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 7a

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I may be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 7b

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

You failed to inform us in advance that «forename» would be absent from school between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I may be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Appendix 8

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Name: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date\_of\_birth»**

With reference to our letter dated **??date**, the leave of absence taken between **??date** and **??date** has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 9

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 10

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Traveller Absence** **«forename» «surname»**

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times «forename» has been absent from school. This academic year «forename» has missed «total\_authorized\_absences» authorised half day sessions and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of «percentage\_attendance»%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if «forename»'s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about «forename»'s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 11

«addressee»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Traveller Absence**

«forename» «surname»

Thank you for contacting me to say that «forename» will be absent from school from **??Date** as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise «forename»'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when «forename» is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer «forename» to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

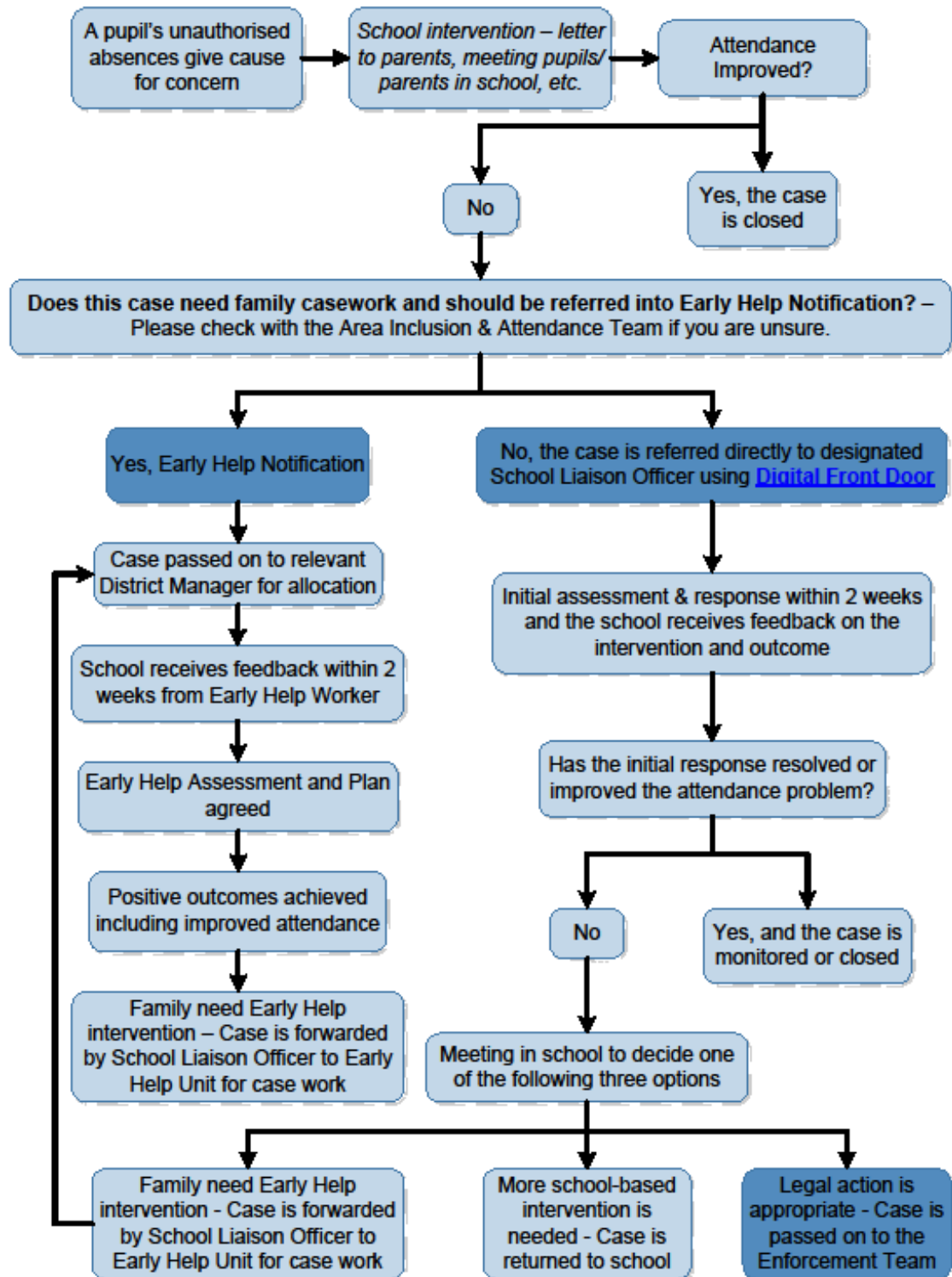
After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take «forename»'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## Appendix 12

### Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance



## **Covid-19 pandemic – Attendance Policy Addendum**

St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School will implement all DfE policies and guidelines relating to attendance during the Covid-19 pandemic. From September 2020 the expectation is that all pupils will attend school and the Pupil Attendance Policy will be reinstated and implemented.

If parents or students have concerns about attendance during the pandemic they should speak to the school office in the first instance.

The school's risk assessment refers to the steps that the school will take to promote safe attendance at the current time.

### **The Covid school day**

#### **Drop-off**

Morning drop off will be between 8.35 and 8.55am. We have extended drop-off time to facilitate social distancing. Families must form a socially distanced queue and maintain social distancing when leaving the site. If just one adult per family comes on site that will help to reduce the number of people and make this easier and safer.

#### **Dismissal times are as follows:**

Class R: 3pm

Classes 1 and 3: 3.05pm

Classes 2 and 4: 3.10pm

Classes 5 and 6: 3.15pm

#### **Additional Covid Register Code in SIMS:**

From 1st September 2020 we will use the standard DfE Codes for attendance and absences at school unless the absence is related to Covid-19. **An additional Code (X) has been added for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19).**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the Autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, DfE have made to added a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This category can only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.