



St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School
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Dear Parents/Carers,

At St Margaret Mary's we place the utmost value on working together in partnership and in establishing strong relationships. In addition to this we recognise the importance of clear lines of communication. As a result we are sharing this letter with you at the beginning of the year following previous correspondence about attendance changes in July. We firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We share the Department for Education's (DfE) ambitions to improve school attendance. In this letter we have highlighted some of the support on offer from St Margaret Mary's. However, we also want to describe the important nationwide changes that came into force on 19th August 2024 in relation to the issuing of fines.

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

Support First

At St Margaret Mary's, we understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to Mrs Murphy our Attendance Officer or Mr Sutton, Headteacher on 0161 681 1504.

We pride ourselves on positive relationships with our parents/carers which proves vital when we invite our parents/carers into school to discuss their child's attendance. Within school we will work closely with our CARITAS Support Worker who works with our children and families and this path can be used in terms of providing Early Help and improving both attendance and punctuality

Attached to this letter is our "Attendance Guide for Parents" which we hope you will find useful.

What happens if my child has a period of unauthorised absence? (Manchester City Council Statutory Information)

One of the main changes from the Department for Education is how **sanctions for unauthorised absence are used**.

If you take an unauthorised holiday in term time or have other periods of unauthorised absence the headteacher may request that Manchester City Council issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice). If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether a national threshold has been met – this is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – as well as other factors.

If there was a second period of unauthorised absence within a three-year period then a second penalty notice could be issued, and this would be at the higher rate of £160.

Further periods of absence within three years, could mean that you are taken to court with no option of a penalty notice.

These rules are coming into force across the country on 19th August 2024 as part of the Department for Education's drive to improve school attendance

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances and in such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance. The headteacher will carefully consider each request on an individual basis.

Thank you for your co-operation and commitment in ensuring your child is in school every day.

As always if you have any queries, concerns or need an informal chat please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

M.Sutton

M.Sutton
Headteacher