



**ST. MARY MAGDALENE**

C OF E SCHOOL

SECONDARY PHASE

*Excellence through innovation,  
founded in faith since 1840.*

**FEDERATION EXECUTIVE CO-HEADTEACHERS**

Mrs Claire Harrison and Mrs Victoria Wainwright

**PRINCIPAL**

Mr Razwan Hussain

## **School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide to Good Attendance**

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Why is regular school attendance so important for my child?**

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education and improve their chances in adult life.

School can also help your child's social skills such as making and developing friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a student is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

### **Punctuality**

Schools are legally required to take a register of students first thing in the morning and at some point in the afternoon. The government advises that schools can keep the register open for up to 30 minutes though the school can set a shorter period of time.

If a student is late but the register is still open, they are marked as late. If the register has already closed when a pupil arrives late and without a satisfactory explanation, it may be classed as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to legal action for not ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.

Schools are concerned with punctuality because most colleges, 6th forms, universities and apprenticeships require the school to inform them about a student's attendance and punctuality when considering whether to offer them a place.

### **Holidays during term time**

The law states that parents do not have a right to take their student out of school for a holiday during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances may a Headteacher grant permission for leave.

The Federation Governing Body sets out the requirements for permission to be granted for term time leave. More information about this can be found in our Attendance Policy which is on our website.

### **Unauthorised absences**

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

#### **Unauthorised absences are:**

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Parents/carers not communicating the reason for absence to the school
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Parents not providing medical evidence to the school to support the absence as being due to ill health
- Children who arrive at school after the registration period has ended
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, holidays or overseas trips in term time

Parents who choose to take their child out of school without written permission from the school may be issued with a fixed penalty fine but more importantly they are creating barriers for their child due to the missed learning that is often not sufficiently caught up.

### **How can I help my child attend school regularly?**

- Talk to your child about school
- Take a positive interest in your child's work, including homework
- Keep in touch with school staff

- Contact school on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend for whatever reason
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events
- Help build the link between school and industry showing how they will need their education to get a job that would make them happy

### **What should I do if I'm worried about my child's school attendance?**

The first thing to do is to contact your child's Family Tutor to discuss your concerns. From there they can offer some suggestions or pass it on to their Head of Year.

### **What are my responsibilities regarding my child's school attendance?**

As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that any child of compulsory school age attends school both regularly and on time. The local authority has a duty to make sure that all parents/carers fulfil this responsibility.

### **What will happen if my child does not attend school regularly?**

The school will contact you in the first instance to raise concerns about your child's attendance. If they see no improvement, or there are particular difficulties involved, a referral will be made to the Attendance Advisory Service.

### **What if my child's school attendance does not improve?**

If you continue to fail in your responsibility, you may:

- See your child becoming more anxious about school as they become aware of the amount of missed learning which can have a serious impact on their long term mental well-being;
- Receive a Fixed Penalty Notice, which is a fine of £60 per parent/carer for truancy, holidays in term time or poor attendance/punctuality;
- Be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court, which could result in you receiving a Community Order, a fine of up to £2500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence;
- See your child issued with an Education Supervision Order, which would mean your child attending court and certain measures being put in place regarding attendance at school

### **How will regular school attendance help my child?**

School gives your child a wide range of opportunities and experiences in the form of academic lessons, educational trips and school clubs allowing them to develop their interests and achieve their full potential. Data shows the link between high attendance and high attainment in school is clear. Regular school attendance means that your child can make the most of their education and be fully equipped for the future ahead.

As a school we work hard to ensure there as much support available as possible to help your child attend school. Please get in touch with our Student Welfare team or Head of Year if you have any concerns about your child's attendance. We want to work with you so that your child is able to take up all the opportunities schools presents in order for them to flourish.

Kind regards,

Mr J Gayle  
**Assistant Principal of Equalities and Disadvantage**

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