

Updated School Attendance Information for Parents/Carers

Please read, sign & return the cut off slip

At Magdalen Gate's we work extremely hard to ensure children are learning to their best ability and are happy within our school. An essential part of this is every child's punctuality & attendance. Every child and parent/carer has a part to play, as well as every member of staff in making sure that the school has excellent standards for attendance and punctuality.

I have high expectations for all of my pupils and that starts with attendance.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE = 100% ATTENDANCE

For more details you can view the full Magdalen Gates Attendance Policy via the website or you can obtain a paper copy from the school office.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT - If your child cannot come to school you must:

- Phone the school. 01603 622675 (option 2 for absent line) preferably before 8:45am to let us know that your child will be off and why.
- If your child has an appointment and will be off for part of the day you can show us the letter or appointment card. Please note text messages will not be accepted.
- If you do not contact school the first day of absence we will try to contact you and this may include coming out to your house.
- If you do not provide school with a reason for absence we have no choice but to mark it as unauthorised absence.

HOLIDAYS IN SCHOOL TIME - Government rules about taking holidays in school time are increasingly strict. In line with Government guidelines the school cannot allow any holidays unless there are really exceptional circumstances.

Absences for visiting extended family abroad will also be unauthorised as holidays/visits can be planned ahead and should be taken during school holiday times.

There is a strong possibility that parents/carers will receive a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) from Norfolk County Council if they take their children on holiday during term time.

HOW ABSENCES ARE COUNTED - Attendance is counted in sessions. The school day is made up of two sessions, the morning and the afternoon. If a child is absent in the morning but comes into school in the afternoon they have missed one session. If they are absent for the whole day they have missed two sessions.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES - This is when the school authorises an absence because they agree that the reason is acceptable, for example:

- Illness *severe enough* to prevent the child coming to school
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Part of the day being missed for an essential medical appointment – routine check ups should not be done in school time.
- Religious observance

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES - This is when the school has not allowed the absences because the reason is not acceptable, for example:

- Minor illnesses or very frequent absence due to Minor illness - unless backed up with a medical note

- Holidays
- Birthdays or day trips
- Taking a whole day off school for a medical appointment
- Being tired
- Shopping

ABSENCES DUE TO EXTREME LATENESS - If a child comes to school after registration closes (9.15am) they are considered so late that they will lose their morning mark and obtain a "U" Code. This type of absence is automatically an unauthorised absence.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEES (P/A) - This is the group of children that schools and the council will particularly concentrate on because their attendance is poor. The Department for Education refers to a Persistent Absentee as pupils who have an attendance below a certain threshold. The Government reduced this from 15% to 10%. This means any child who has 90% attendance or less is classed as a persistent absentee.

Persistent absenteeism is monitored regularly and children who have missed a certain number of sessions will be considered at risk of becoming persistent absentees by the end of the school year. Persistent Absenteeism will result in Fixed Penalty Notice warnings, fines and legal action.

Note - Even if an absence is authorised it is still an absence and will count towards a final figure at the end of the year.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS - We know that sometimes children need urgent appointments, or parents/carers are given very little choice about the times for hospital appointments. However, most appointments are routine, e.g. dental check-ups, non urgent GP appointments. A lot of school time is missed due to routine medical appointments that could be arranged for a different time. While we understand that it can be hard to get appointments, we encourage & ask parents/carers to make these appointments outside of school time. **For any dental/GP apts in school we will ask to see an appointment card/letter in order for this absence to be authorised.** You are asked to inform the school **in the morning** if your child has to leave early for an apt.

WHY GOOD ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT - At Magdalen Gates we believe that a good education gives children opportunities for life. A good education starts with good attendance. Being at school regularly gives children the best chance to learn and to get the most out of all that school has to offer, such as the chance to socialize and have friends and to be involved in a huge range of activities

Attendance is important in every year group. In early years children learn the foundations for all of their future learning, and every year children learn more, building their knowledge & understanding.

Magdalen Gates is a happy, successful school and your child is part of that. We aim to give them the best opportunities for a great future.

WE REWARD GOOD ATTENDANCE – Currently our rewards include:

- Weekly stickers for children who have been in school every day all week.
- Weekly Class rewards
- Weekly 100% attendance for afternoon tea with the Head
- Termly certificates for 100% attendance in a term
- Annual certificates for 100% attendance all year
- The school's attendance target is 100% but pupils who have achieved 97%* or above will be offered a termly attendance trip. The school recognises that pupils may be absent through illness but we hope that their attendance will improve for them to attend the next *termly* trip.
- 100% attendance for the year is rewarded with an invitation for afternoon lunch with the Headteacher during July each year.

*** Note: The school sets annual attendance targets each year. From September 2017 the “termly attendance trips” are now only offered to pupils with 97% or above**

TIPS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY:

- **Children should go to bed early enough** - Tired children are hard to wake up and find it difficult to learn. Going to bed at a reasonable time makes things easier for them and you.
- **Be in school regularly and on time** - It is settling for children and helps them get into a routine. The more regularly they are in school and on time the more they get used to it.
- **Get up early enough** - Avoid rushing and feeling stressed. Get up early enough and give yourself enough time to get ready.
- **Limit TV or game time in the morning** - Avoid arguments and lateness by limiting how long they are allowed to watch TV or play games in the morning. If it regularly causes problems think about banning it completely in the mornings.
- **Get things ready the night before** - If uniforms, packed lunches, etc. are ready the night before it saves a lot of time in the mornings.
- **Make time for breakfast – or come to Breakfast Club at school** - Making time for breakfast can help to keep things calm in the morning and saves time rather than having to stop at the shops on the way to school. Or you could consider the school’s Breakfast Club where children have time to eat, play and get ready for the school day. Breakfast Club opens at 8.00am.

Thank you for your continued support.

Cara Fahy
Headteacher

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RETURN SLIP

Parent Information on Absence & Legal Intervention letter – 2018-2019

CHILDS NAME: _____ **CLASS /YEAR GROUP** _____

- I have read and understood the Attendance & Legal Intervention letter and the Information sheet on attendance for parents
- I agree to work in partnership with Magdalen Gates Primary School to ensure my child attends school regularly.

PARENT/CARER _____

Date: September 2018