



St. Margaret's C of E Primary School  
The Mardens, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0AQ  
Telephone 01293 521077  
Headteacher: Mrs Jill Hine B.Ed. (Hons), NPQH

*Loving God~Serving others~Fulfilling our potential*

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **Request for Absence in term time and the use of Fixed Penalty Notices**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that in line with the Crawley School's Attendance Policy, requests for absence in term time will not be authorised. There are only 190 contact days in the school year which means that there are 175 non-school days left for holidays, treats and shopping. This letter gives you the opportunity to think carefully about your decision to take your child/ren out of school during term time.

Parents must state why they consider it essential for them to take their child out of school as absence from learning has been proven adversely to affect children's academic progress. Schools cannot authorise absence except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances so I would like to draw your attention to the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for the following: -

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised. A school day is two sessions AM and PM. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised.
- Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised i.e. if you fail to provide evidence of an absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Code O.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Code U.
- There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. It will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence. Code G.
- If you notify the school that your child is ill prior to or after a period of authorised or unauthorised absence, you will need to provide medical documentation or the absence will be unauthorised and if the total number of days is 5 or more then a referral will be made for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).
- If you withdraw your child/ren from school during term time without authorisation being requested in advance, in line with the school's policy.
  - FPN's can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school. The school makes a referral to West Sussex County Council for consideration of further legal action, which may involve the issuing of a FPN.

The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine of £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. After 28 days, the Student Entitlement: Investigation (PE:I) will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN.

Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional or if your child is ill for a period of 5 days or more, we would expect them to have seen a doctor.



For illnesses of this duration, we will ask to see supporting medical documentation, which can be in the form of a medical certificate/note from your GP, a photocopy/scan of any prescription, a signed appointment card, a screen shot of your call to the surgery, or a GP signature/stamp in your child's homework diary.

Regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the student fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to Student Entitlement: Investigation (PE:I), which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the student off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the student does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the student off roll. If your child is taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

Further information on legal action can be found on GOV.UK or on the West Sussex County Council website under the section Education, Children and Families, Schools and Colleges, School Attendance, School Absences.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Hine  
Headteacher