



Guide for Parents

Attendance and punctuality

June 2019

St Martin's School



This is a guide for parents about our policy for attendance and punctuality. Please refer to the full policy on our website for more detailed information.

St Martin's School consider attendance and punctuality a high priority. We believe that every day matters in a child's education. Members of the Senior Leadership team regularly monitor attendance and punctuality data.

Parents/carers Responsibilities

Parents/carers are required by law to ensure that all children of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 16) receive a full time education either by registering a child at a school or be arranging an alternative to school in line with the Education Departments' Policy.

These responsibilities extend beyond ensuring regular attendance and punctuality, it requires parents/carers to make certain that each child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed with the correct equipment and prepared for learning.

Parents/carers can support their child/ren by keeping requests for absence to a minimum. It should not be automatically assumed that schools will agree to absence requests. Nor should unjustified absences from school be condoned. If a child is unable to attend school for whatever reason, parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school on the first day of absence and to keep the school updated on subsequent days.

Parents/carers should work in partnership with schools in all matters concerning their child/ren's education by actively supporting school policies on attendance, punctuality, behaviour and homework.

Parents/carers should avoid taking their child/ren out of school during term time. Such absences can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. It is at the discretion of the Head teacher to grant leave, only in exceptional cases.



Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service at the Education Department work closely with the school to support attendance, punctuality and welfare. They visit the school regularly to work with the school and families to support children on a variety of different areas. The Education Welfare Service also support St Martin's in monitoring attendance and punctuality data. If you would like to have a meeting with our Education Welfare Officer, please ask at the School Office.

Attendance

Your child will need to attend school every day. If they cannot come to school for any reason e.g. illness, parents/carers must contact school on the first morning of absence to let school know the reason why their child will not be in school and keep us updated on subsequent days of illness. Parents/carers can contact us via phone or coming into the front office to see the school secretary. If your child is not at school and we do not receive a message from you by 9.30am a phone call from our School Secretary will be made to parents. If we cannot contact someone, then a member of the senior leadership team would phone our Education Welfare Service for advice.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.45am. Children who arrive in plenty of time and feel settled as they come into school have a good start to the day. We encourage families to be in school by 8.40am. If your child arrives in their classroom later than 8.45am, they will be marked late in the register. You will also be asked to sign your child in at the school office, stating the reason for lateness.

What happens if my child is late?

If your child is late on a regular basis within two weeks, a member of the leadership team will get in touch with you to let you know and to offer support. We want to work together with you so that your child can arrive at school in time so that they are ready for their learning and feel settled in the morning. If your child continues to be late, you will be invited into school for a meeting to offer support about how we can work together to ensure your child is on time. This will also include writing an action plan. If lateness continues after this, then we will request involvement from Education Welfare Service and they will also be able to offer support to the family.



What happens if we would like to take our child/ren out of school during term time?

The Education Department and St Martin's School does not, at any time, support leave during term time, however, in exceptional circumstances head teachers have the discretionary power to grant leave. It starts from the premise that *every day counts* and that permission is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. Leave is not granted as a reward for good attendance.

When parents request leave, each case is considered carefully taking into account:

- The age of the child;
- The time of year;
- The nature and purpose of the trip;
- Family circumstances;
- Attendance pattern of the pupil;
- Previous requests.

If you need to request leave from school, please obtain a form from our School Secretary. Please fill in the form with as much detail as possible and return it to the School Office. We will send you a letter or email about your request within five working days. If we need more information, you will be invited to discuss your request with a member of the leadership team.

