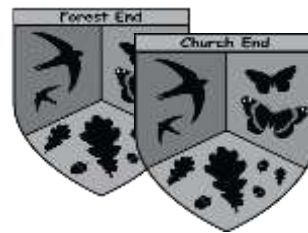


**Marston Moreteyne VC School**  
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**Marston Moreteyne VC School**



**1847**

Value of the Month: Contentment

5<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Marston Moreteyne VC School we believe we offer a supportive approach to attendance and encourage our families to contact us should there be any barriers to your child arriving at school on time every day. In preparation for September 2024, and the new rules around attendance, please ensure you read the following and review any holiday plans during term-time you may have as a family.

### **New Attendance Rules Parents Need to Know for September 2024**

You will know that if a child misses just one day of school, this is one day's worth of education lost. If it's more than one day, those losses will be cumulative and the effect on long-term prospects could not be more damaging. Prior to Covid, absenteeism had been on the decline, but since the lockdowns, it appears attitudes towards attendance have changed and we are seeing an increase in absenteeism once again. This does not take into account the number of children not attending school due to SEND/SEMH issues and anxieties.

Ministers have now published guidance on managing school attendance that will become mandatory from September 2024. Here's what you need to know.

### **£80 fines and Improvement Notices**

Absence fines charged to parents will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. From Autumn term 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any notice thereafter will automatically be charged at £160. Parents will also receive "improvement notices", where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with education and improve their child's attendance before a fine is issued.

### **National fine thresholds**

From September, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (1 session = half day) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. They should "not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices". The threshold can be met with "any combination of unauthorised absence". For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

### **Long-Term Sickness to be Flagged with Local Authorities**

Schools will have to give councils the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days. Schools will also be "expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school".

## Holidays during Term Time

All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at the Headteacher's discretion for 'exceptional circumstances'. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Term times are for education. There is some debate about what 'exceptional circumstances' means when deciding whether to grant absence for pupils during term time. Some examples include:

- Children may need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

## Mental Health Awareness

All schools should now be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

The guidance acknowledges "many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods". But it is "important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly".

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/29/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/>

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Watts

**Head of School & Designated Safeguarding Lead**

I am a Domestic Abuse Responder, you can talk to me about Domestic Abuse