

Our Ref: 145 15

14th October 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

Invitation to parents/carers to 'Maintaining Outstanding Attendance' Conference at St Margaret's

All parents are invited to an information evening introducing the changes to the new Attendance procedures. Communication between school and the home has never been more important so far as attendance is concerned. On the evening of Monday 9th November at 6.00pm in the Resources Centre, I will be explaining how the school intends to promote outstanding attendance, track your son's attendance, and the interventions we will make within school to avoid poor attendance. Refreshments will be provided and it will finish at **6.45pm**. Should you wish to attend please complete the reply slip below and return it to me.

As you may be aware, there have been recent legislative changes that now govern much of Attendance policy. **We have had confirmation from the local authority that the threshold for Persistent Absences is increasing from 85% to 90%** - you will find the letter from the authority on our school website. The implications of this are that schools must ensure they make referrals to Education and Welfare departments where attendance falls below this 90% threshold. At St Margaret's we have always attempted to strike a proportionate balance between legislation and our school ethos. We recognise that there are often circumstances – such as illness – that prevent your son from coming into school. Furthermore, requests for absence have been historically granted on grounds of 'special consideration'. However, given the raised threshold, we do wish to notify you of the various steps the school will take to ensure we robustly track attendance:

- Firstly, where attendance falls below 97%, you are likely to receive a telephone call from our school Attendance and Welfare department alerting you to the drop in attendance. This will be an opportunity to discuss the current percentage and any valid reasons that might explain it;
- Where attendance falls below 95% you are likely to receive a letter home to confirm the falling attendance figure; it will outline the future implications should the percentage continue to fall;
- Finally, where attendance falls below 92%, you will be invited to offer a written response to explain the reasons for the low percentage as this is significantly below the school attendance target. Responses from parents / carers will be attached to the Education and Welfare referral should the figure drop below the new PA threshold of 90%;
- **Where a student is referred to Education and Welfare, evidence of the school's involvement will be shared. Authority regulations from September 2015 mean we must make referrals when attendance falls below 90%; it is not uncommon for penalty notices to be issued at this point. For more information, see the 'Positive attendance' diagram on our school website.**

The above interventions are designed to ensure your son's attendance remains as high as possible; good attendance is a key quality that post 16 establishments and future employers will look for.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Mr R Lawton
Assistant Principal
Director of Pastoral Care

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REPLY SLIP 'Maintaining Outstanding Attendance' Conference at St Margaret's – Return to Mr Lawton

Student Name: _____ Form: _____

I/we* will/will not* (*delete as appropriate) be attending the above conference on Monday 9th November at 6.00 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____