

School Attendance from September 2020
COVID-19 Questions and Answers

The government has stated that from September 2020 all children must return to school, so as to minimise the longer-term impact of the pandemic on your children's education, wellbeing and wider development. Missing out on more time in the classroom will put your child at risk of falling further behind. Children with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well.

St-Margaret's Academy and the Education Welfare Team will be working with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of the autumn term so as to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

School attendance is therefore mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term – September 2020. This means that from this point in time, the usual rules on compulsory school attendance will apply.

Based on government guidance and public health advice, we have provided some frequently asked questions and answers in the hope of assisting you to understand the expectations, lessening your fears and successfully navigating your child's return to school.

1. My child has symptoms and/or a positive COVID-19 test result themselves; or has been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus. When should my child attend school?

Your child should not come into school if they or someone in their household have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive in the last 7 days. You should arrange for them to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). In line with public health advice, your child should self-isolate for up to 14 days if they have symptoms or a positive test result, or if they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of the household (including any siblings) must also self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

2. My child is on the shielded patient list and/or lives with a family member who is on the shielding patient list. When does my child have to return to school?

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. St-Margaret's has put robust safety measures in place to keep your child stay safe and reduce the risk in school. You may wish to contact us directly for more information on what these safety measures will look like to reassure yourself and your child.

3. My child is no longer required to shield but remains under the care of a specialist health care professional and has been advised to continue shielding. What will happen in relation to my child's education?

If your child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, St-Margaret's will be able to immediately offer your child access to remote education. Engagement with this activity will be monitored by the school. Where a child is not able to attend school because parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

4. I am reluctant and worried about my child returning to school, and whether the right measures are in place to protect him/her. Does my child need to return to school?

If your child does not fall into the categories discussed above then your child must resume their attendance at St-Margaret's with effect from September 2020. Attendance at school is compulsory from this date. We do appreciate that many parents may be worried about their children returning to school, and your child may also be nervous about changes to the school routine and layout. St-Margaret's has put robust safety measures in place to keep your child safe and reduce the risk in school. You may wish to contact us directly for more information on what these safety measures will look like to reassure yourself and your child.

5. We have struggled maintaining routines during lockdown and this has impacted on my child's behaviour. What should I do to help my child return to school?

If you are worried about your child's behaviour please contact us for additional support. St-Margaret's will work with you to develop a plan to re-engage your child and re-establish routines to help your child settle back into school life.

6. Both I and my child have heightened anxiety as a result of COVID-19 and lockdown, and feel extremely low and/or fearful. Does my child need to return to school?

Yes. We are mindful that many pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. Please be reassured that St-Margaret's, the Education Welfare Team and a host of other professionals within Children's Services will be on hand to put the right support in place to address your anxieties. Please contact us for any additional support or advice if you feel this may be required. We will work with you to develop a plan to re-engage your child back into the classroom.

If there is anything we can do to help your child return to school, or if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the school admin@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk or myself directly snewman@st-margarets.torbay.sch.uk

We look forward to seeing you all soon!

Kind Regards

Samantha Newman

Administrator / Supporting School Attendance

St Margaret's Academy