

St Michael's Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At St Michael's Primary School we seek to nurture the whole child and instil a love of learning by inspiring young minds within a happy, caring community based on the Christian values of love; joy; kindness; peace; self-control; faithfulness; wisdom and trust

St Michaels CE Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at St Michael's CE Primary School.

Aims

- To work with parents to ensure that children gain the greatest benefit from the educational opportunities offered by the school
- To minimise absence and the serious disruption caused to children's continuity of learning
- To give children the best possible start in life
- To encourage good attendance and time keeping habits
- To prepare children for the world of work

Promoting regular attendance

The school takes a pro-active stance in promoting good attendance in the following ways:

- All staff are vigilant about attendance and punctuality, discuss these issues regularly in class and alert the headteacher if there are concerns
- Parents are expected to take their holidays during the 13 weeks that the school is closed
- Parents will be kept informed about school attendance on the website
- A class attendance award (Attendance Ted) is given each week
- An attendance chart is on display on the school website
- The school makes phone calls to children's homes on the first day of any unexplained absence
- Letters are sent to families where children's attendance drops below 90%
- Letters are sent to families where there are concerns about patterns of attendance
- Children with poor or unexpected behaviour patterns are given an opportunity to discuss any difficulties they may be having in or out of school
- Attendance is not authorised unless appropriate
- Attendance is regularly analysed and concerns acted upon
- Parents are asked to write to the school to notify all absences that are known in advance
- The school prospectus gives details about contacting the school if a child is ill
- Individual certificates are awarded every seasonal term for 100% attendance
- In the event of extended periods of absence due to illness or special circumstances the school will work with families to support children's learning at home

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- Teachers are aware of areas of learning that children have missed and take this into account when planning future work
- Where children have been absent for extended periods, a re-integration plan will be drawn up with all the necessary agencies
- This attendance policy is posted on the school website

Authorised and unauthorised absence

New attendance codes for registers were introduced in September 2006 and give very clear definitions of when an absence should be classed as authorised or unauthorised.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/uploads/Absence%20and%20Attendance%20Codes%202006.doc>

What the law says:

Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their children attend school regularly. This includes parents making sure their children attend school every day, on time, in uniform and ready to learn.

The law says that schools can only authorise absence for the following:

- Medical reasons
- Religious reasons
- Holidays
- Special circumstances

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons and is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. If the absence is not authorised, the parents will be notified.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Oversleeping
- Shopping trips
- Waiting in for deliveries
- Outings
- Visits to relatives
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Lack of school uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Child's/family birthday
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without evidence from hospital and/or very good reasons

Holidays in term time

The school will **not** authorise holidays in term time :

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 mean that from 1st September 2013 the school will no longer be able to grant any leave unless there are exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations set out the procedures for

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issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

From 1st September 2013 there is no entitlement to take children on holiday during term time and you can be fined for doing so without consent. The amendment has come from the Department of Education and is unfortunately out of the control of individual schools

If parents request holiday absence

- The school is not obliged to authorise holidays and if not approved the holiday will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If children are ill

- This will be treated as an authorised absence
- Parents are expected to phone/email the school at the beginning of the day to say what is wrong with the child.
- If the school has not been contacted, the office will phone the home to find out why the child is absent.
- If the parents have not phoned the school or if the headteacher is not satisfied with the reason given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If children are late

The school gates are locked at 9am. Children arriving after this time enter school via the office reception lobby and sign in the Late Book.

They will receive a late mark in the register.

If children are regularly late, the school will contact the family and try to work out a solution.

If children arrive after 9:30am without good reason they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence.

Medical appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be made during the school holidays, wherever possible.

Parents should request absence in advance and notify the school office.

These will usually be recorded as authorised absence.

Informing parents about attendance

Attendance percentages are recorded in children's individual school reports annually.

Whole school attendance figures are published each week on the website.

Certificates for good attendance are given out every seasonal term.

Current attendance figures can be obtained from the office on request.

Truantiing

If children fail to attend school without their parent's permission or leave school without permission they are truantiing. This will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.

Such behaviour should be picked up quickly, as the school policy is to phone home if a child is not in school for a known reason.

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If parents think their child is truanting, they should contact the class teacher or headteacher who will work with the family to find out why the child is not attending and try to sort out any problems.

Education Welfare Officers

The area Education Welfare Officer regularly visits the school to check absence and lateness and contact parents when their child's attendance is a cause for concern. It is expected that a child will have a minimum 96.2% attendance.

They may visit children and parents in their home.

They have the power to take parents to court if a child fails to attend school regularly. Fines can be issued up to a maximum of £2,500. Failure to pay the fine may result in imprisonment.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices (fines) may be issued for:

- Persistent truancy
- Persistent lateness
- Parentally condoned absences

Payment of a penalty notice within 28 days is £50.

After this time but within 42 days is £100.

Non-payment of a penalty notice will trigger a fast track prosecution in a Magistrates' Court.