



St Michael's CE (Controlled) Junior School

Attendance Policy

Creation Date		
Issue Date	January 2019	
Agreed & Authorised (Name & designation)	Mrs Steph Tyler Headteacher	Mr Ian White Chair of Governors
Signature(s)		
Next Review Date	January 2022	
Remarks		

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education, Hampshire County Council and The Prevent Duty 2015. This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's communications throughout the year and can be found on the Hampshire website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviourattendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure your child attends school regularly and this policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this.

Section 1

Rationale/statement of intent

At St Michael's we believe that regular, full-time attendance and punctuality are essential if pupils are to reach their full potential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel welcome, valued and safe. The school and parents have a collective responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality to ensure that every child has access to the education he/she is entitled to.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%

- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find it easier to cope with school routines, school work and friendships
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Section 2

2.1 Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will work with parents to share our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance via School Newsletters and regular communications.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide regular information on matters related to attendance on our school attendance bulletin board
- notify parents of poor attendance by letter
- report to you on how your child is performing in school and how their attendance and punctuality rate relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- reward good or improving attendance through celebration assemblies, certificates and 100% attendance badges
- set targets for the whole school and individual classes for attendance and display these in the school

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students' at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.

- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to registration and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Parents will:
 - inform the school on the first day of absence
 - discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance
 - support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
 - make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
 - avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
 - only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8:45 am and again for the afternoon session at 1:00 pm.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss getting vital information, miss work time, cause disruption to the lesson for others and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8:45am and **all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**
- Morning registration is at 8:50 am and it closes at 9:00am.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and

dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

- A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- If your child is absent you must:
- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- phone on each day on which the child is absent – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us or you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher or Family Support Worker if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

Third day absence

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start ***child missing in education*** procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. Our Family Support Worker may visit the child's home address and we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is **at risk of missing**. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning.

Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will:

- offer you and your child help from the family support worker, with any issues preventing good school attendance
- offer parenting classes
- set targets and rewards in school, for your child, to encourage good attendance
- celebrate your child's improved attendance

All our persistent absentee pupils and their parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher/member of the senior leadership team and the family support worker, and are subject to an Attendance Support Plan.

Section 4

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form, which can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the office, in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in

Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail). Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5

Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 6

Penalty Notice for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.

The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

A copy is available on our website:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviourattendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties

Penalty Notice for non-attendance – Hampshire's Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness
- (code *O*) and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed

Legal measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parents/ carers' request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission **and the unauthorised absence (coded *G*) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued**

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. **10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
2. **one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance**

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

[www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance-guidanceforparents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/guidanceforparents/possible-penalties)

Section 7

7.1 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

Your child will bring home a Home School Link book each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give

in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher or the family support worker, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

7.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the junior school/secondary school parents are asked to:

1 Provide the School office with comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

2 If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

7.3 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as *C*, an authorised absence.

7.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed the family intends to return. To ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place and records the absence as authorised through the *T* code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Section 8

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche.

Appendices

The law

The Education Act 1996, Part I, Section 7 states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- 1. to his age, ability and aptitude and*
- 2. to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

For educational purposes the term *parent* is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI, Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and admission roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents on attendance

The following Department for Education documents are used to guide attendance recording:

Absence and attendance codes (guidance for schools and local authorities)

Keeping pupil registers (guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations).

The Prevent Duty, 2015

These and other guidance documents are available on the Department for Education website.

Hampshire County Council guidance is available on Hantsweb at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools