

Attendance Policy

Document Summary

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Statutory Policy?	Yes
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FYI: Version control should be used for all formal documents and managed as:-

- ▶ 0.1 (1st draft version)
- ▶ 0.2 (2nd draft and so on..... 0.3. 0.4 etc)
- ▶ 1.0 (Once document has been approved)
- ▶ 1.2 (during review/approval of a lifecycle document i.e. policies)
- ▶ 2.0 (2nd approved document) and so on.

Amendment History

Version	Amendment Date	Author	Amendment Summary
1.1	130922	Jo P	Reviewing current policy, adapting school start times, removing Covid-19 addendum, adding flowcharts and placing new top sheet on.
1.2	140524	Pete B and Malcolm F	Amended authorised absence for funeral or wedding to 'close' family member. Updated fine amounts for unauthorised holiday absence from Sept' 24.

Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To provide clear information for parents about all aspects of school attendance, including their roles and responsibilities.
- To encourage children to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality as appropriate.
- To have clearly defined procedures for registering and monitoring attendance and lateness.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly (target = 97% attendance and above) and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We believe that regular and punctual school attendance is essential if children are to gain maximum benefit from their schooling both academically and socially.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School Procedures

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
 - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
 - Absent
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- (See Appendix 1 for the DfE Attendance Codes.)

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Arrival Time

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50am on each school day. Each classroom door is open from 08:40am so pupils can enter their classroom between 08.40am and 08.50am. Pupils arriving after 08.50am will be marked as late.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:50am and will be kept open until 09:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at the end of each year groups lunch time (by 01:00pm for Reception, by 01:15pm for KS1 and by 01:30pm for KS2).

Registers are recorded electronically using Arbor.

Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents should contact the school office to report an absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

Parent/Carers must provide an explanation for all absences from school through a phone call or e-mail on the day of the child's absence. Any absences notified after this day will be automatically unauthorised unless medical evidence can be provided.

If a parent/carer has not contacted the school to report their child's absence, the Office Staff will telephone that morning to seek an explanation. If telephone contact is made and an explanation given, the absence is recorded using the appropriate code (see Appendix 1). If telephone contact is not made, the Office Staff will send a text message and/or e-mail requesting the parent/carer make contact with the school to explain the child/ren's absence.

The above steps are repeated on the second day of an unexplained absence. On the third day of an unexplained absence, the Office Staff notify the Deputy Headteacher who will contact the emergency contacts listed for the child/ren and/or ensure a visit to the family home is made for a house call, posting a letter requesting the family make contact if there is no answer at the door. If there is no answer, we will then contact Children's Services and/or the Police, requesting a welfare check at the family home.

(See Appendix 2 for Unplanned Absence Flowchart).

Medical/Dental Appointments and Illness

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and not absent for the whole day.

Evidence of the appointment (e.g. letter, appointment card or confirmation email) should be provided to the school office in advance of the appointment. Applications for other types of absence in term time

must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in 'Granting Approval for Term-time Absence'.

Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on their education.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L). A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be initially marked as absent, but then as arriving after the register has closed, using the appropriate code (U).

For example:

School begins at 08.50am. If pupils arrive after 08.50am they will be marked in late (L). Pupils are able to come in to school from 08:40am, and we strongly encourage them to do so.

If a child arrives after 09:20am, they will be given a separate code (U), which counts as unauthorised absence.

If we have concerns about a child's lateness we will contact their parents/carers. Persistent lateness could result in a School Attendance Meeting being held and U-code lateness could result in the school considering whether a Penalty Notice should be enforced.

Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

(see Appendix 2 for School Absence Flowchart).

Reporting to Parents

The school will report to parents on their child's overall attendance annually on the child's written end-of-year report. Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, as well as lates, are reported to parents.

Leaving and Returning to School during the School Day

Parent/Carers must notify school staff if the pupil leaves the school site during the school day by signing the pupil out at the office. Parent/Carers must sign pupils back into school on their return. The signing in and out record will be the responsibility of the administrative team in the event of a fire or other evacuation of the school premises.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Granting Approval for Term-time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Examples of what we define as 'exceptional circumstances' are listed below:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you (an example might be the wedding or funeral of a close family member living abroad)

- It may also be appropriate to make allowances for parents who work for the emergency services and are only granted leave at certain times

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing in advance to the Headteacher who will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. The fact that a Parent/Carer has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England)

Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained above
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Leave of absence – e.g. for a close family bereavement, funeral, or wedding (normally one day)
- Exclusion from school
- Interviews or visits to school open days
- Music or other exams

The following are example of unauthorised absence (when absence will not be approved):

- Absence due to a birthday or anniversary
- Shopping for school uniform
- Looking after or visiting family members
- Day trips

Legal Sanctions

Local Authorities, at the request of schools, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 (£80 from August 2024) per child, per parent, within 21 days or £120 (£180 from August 2024) within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to request a penalty notice rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Current Guidance in South Gloucestershire

If a pupil misses more than 10 sessions (5 days) over any 7-week period, parents may be liable to a penalty notice. Also, if your child is absent from school either side of an unauthorised holiday, these days will be included as part of the holiday and this may lead to a Penalty Notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

We promote excellent attendance in the following ways:

- Communicating to parents early about issues or concerns
- Offering a reasonably priced breakfast club service
- Encouraging a climate within school which children want to be a part of - this is characterised by a high quality, stimulating curriculum; plenty of opportunities for children to develop other talents (e.g. through sport, music and clubs); the promotion of a positive behaviour environment; and through encouraging independence and responsibility
- Having clear and well-publicised behaviour and anti-bullying policies - we aim to always listen carefully to issues raised by children or parents, and deal with problems swiftly and fairly
- Discussing the importance of excellence attendance with parents at the beginning of each year in each year group's parents information meeting and at parents' evenings throughout the year
- The responsibilities of parents, children, and the school in relation to attendance and punctuality are laid out in the Home-School Agreement - which all parties are encouraged to sign
- Regular reminders in newsletters about attendance and its importance
- Support from our Family Link Worker and Education Welfare Officer
- Acknowledging positive improvements in attendance through messages sent home, certificates and praise.

Attendance Monitoring

The Deputy Headteacher monitors pupil absence and regularly. Attendance is monitored for both individual pupils and particular groups of pupils (e.g. those pupils eligible for Free School Meals or the Pupil Premium, pupils in different year groups and those pupils with Special Educational Needs). This monitoring and subsequent evaluation informs those children in need of intervention and support.

The school regards 97% attendance over the year as being a good level of attendance. We will monitor pupils whose attendance is below 95% after Term 1, or if there is any unauthorised absence, and contact parents for a discussion where there are concerns. This may be for the following reasons:

- Frequent broken weeks as regular days' absence are likely to be more indicative of a concern than a whole week's absence
- Frequent spells of illness
- Unauthorised absence

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Full Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Foundation and Pastoral Committee will look at Attendance matters in more detail.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and reporting it to governors. The Deputy Head is responsible for monitoring school-level absence data. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and recommends fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Team

The attendance team at St Michael's consists of:

- The Attendance Officer (Deputy Head)
- The Headteacher
- The Family Link Worker
- The Education Welfare Officer

Role of Attendance Officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to recommend fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system. For pupils of compulsory school age, the office staff are required to differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised.

Parents

Parents are expected to support the attendance of their child by:

- Ensuring their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- Instill in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Not requesting absence from school unless the child is genuinely unwell (or has a medical appointment), or unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Notifying the school office of the child's illness on a daily basis
- Bringing any problems which may make their child reluctant to attend school (e.g. family breakdown or bullying) to the attention of the school as soon as possible
- Resolving any problems without withdrawing their child from schooling
- Not booking holidays during term time

Pupils

All children are expected to be on time for lessons during the course of the day and no child is to leave the school premises during the day unless authorised by the school.

As children reach the top end of the school (i.e. Year 5 and Year 6) they should begin to take on more responsibility for their own attendance, including ensuring they are ready for school in the morning, and being on time if they come into school on their own. Lateness by these pupils may be followed up by in-school sanctions, e.g. making up time at lunchtime.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

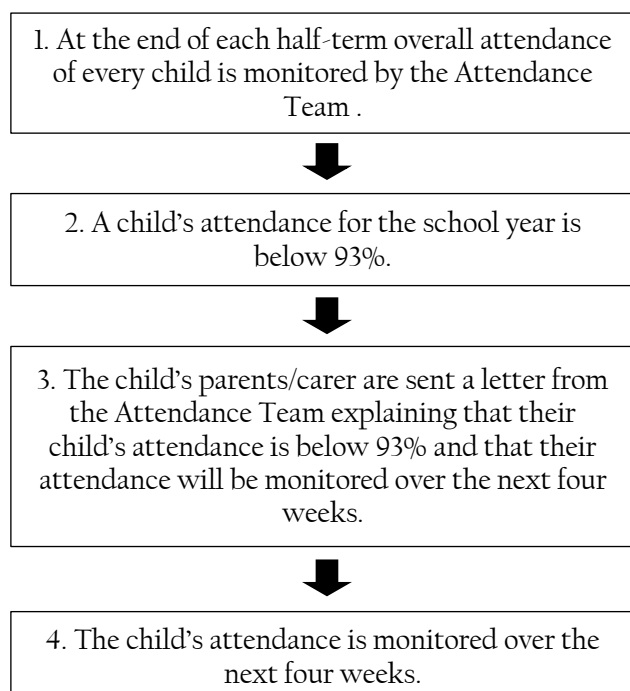
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

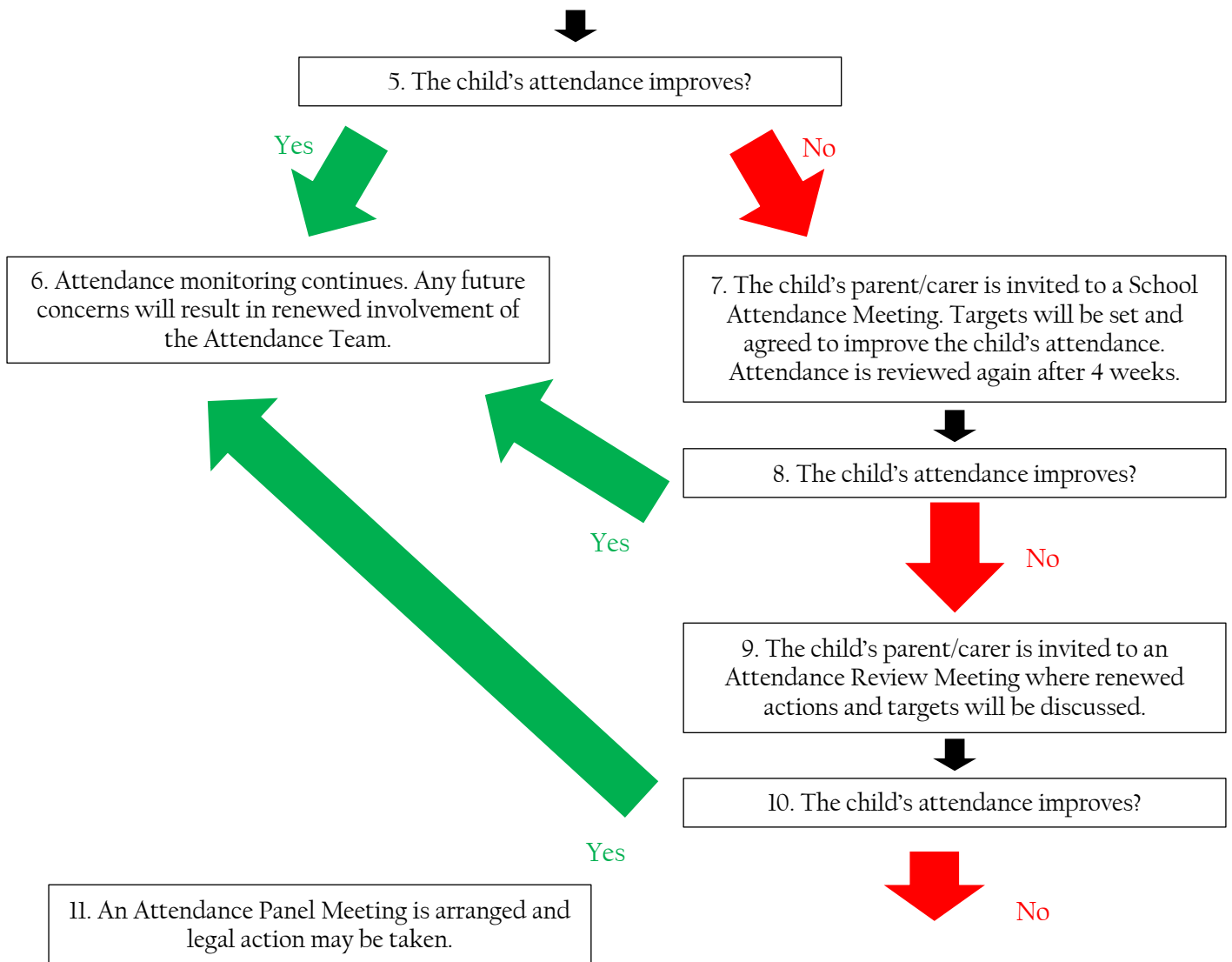
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

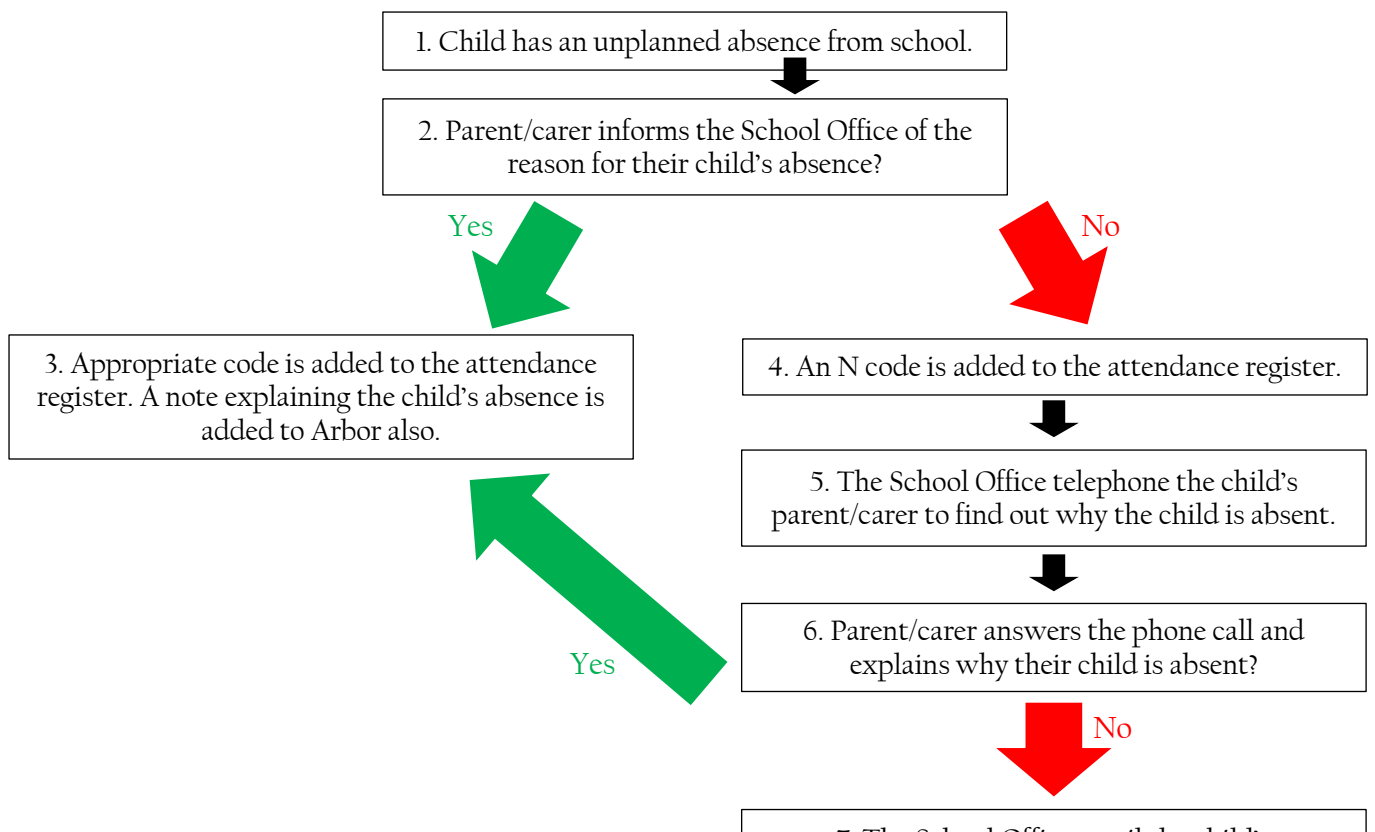
Appendix 2: Attendance Flowcharts

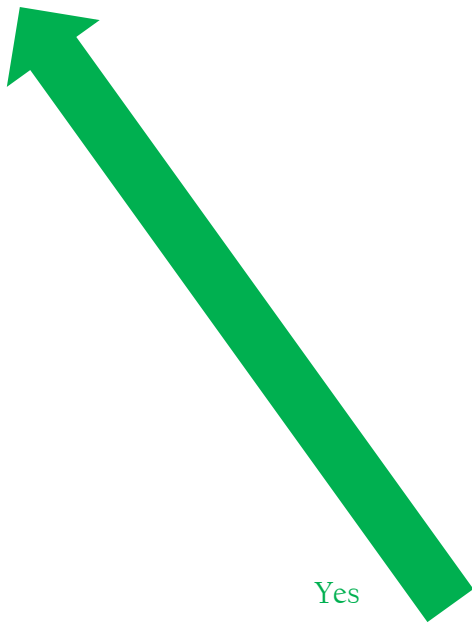
St Michael's Attendance Flowchart





St Michael's Unplanned Absence Flowchart





Yes

13. The Head/Deputy Head is informed and will contact the child's emergency contacts and/or ensure a visit to the family home is made for a house call and if necessary to post a letter requesting the family make contact if there is no answer. If there is no answer or contact from the family, the police/Children's Services will then be contacted to request a welfare call.