



St Michael's C of E VA Primary School

As a Church School we seek to ensure that the ethos and principles of Christianity underpin the experiences of the children in our care.

Our school vision is to provide a nurturing learning environment and a curriculum that develops character, teaches lifelong learning skills, fosters creativity and provides opportunities for exploration so that all pupils can experience

'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

Attendance Policy

Approved by the Curriculum Committee: July 2025

Frequency of Review: Annually

Next Review Date: July 2026

Signed: 

15.07.25
Date.....

Aims and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements and expectations for school attendance and to create a culture in which the reasons for good attendance and punctuality are fully understood and valued by all in the school community.

We expect all children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school, from both children and parents. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for good attendance and punctuality is shared between all members of the school community:

- School staff and governors
- Parents and carers
- Pupils
- Appropriate external agencies

We all need to understand and commit to fulfilling our responsibilities if good attendance is to be achieved.

The school staff and governors will:

- Provide a safe and effective learning environment;
- Maintain accurate records of attendance and punctuality (ie morning and afternoon registers) in accordance with government legislation and guidance
- Produce, and update as required, school attendance policies and guidance which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents, pupils and staff;
- Ensure that parents are clear about the procedures to follow if their children are absent from school
- Work actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole, with a view to all children attending for 97% or more;
- Ensure that all staff adopt a consistent and pro-active attitude towards encouraging and reinforcing the importance and benefits of regular and punctual attendance;
- Follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality promptly and sensitively in accordance with clearly communicated procedures.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at the school and ensuring that they attend and stay at school.

To work towards good attendance, parents should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn;
- Instill in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's rules and guidance;
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good learning and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings;
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- Ensure they are aware of the school policy on attendance;

- Notify the school if their child is absent in accordance with the required school procedures;
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments wherever possible during school hours;
- Not book holidays during term time.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to understand the requirement to attend school. They should

- Attend school regularly and punctually;
- Appreciate the importance of being ready to learn

External Agencies

The Attendance Service supports the school to enforce regular school attendance. The school works with its allocated Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to monitor attendance and to consider additional strategies that could be put in place to support improved attendance, both for the school as a whole and for individuals.

Definition of good attendance

The St Michael's attendance target is 97%.

190 attendance days in the school year = 380 morning and afternoon sessions.

Absence of 6 days (12 sessions) equates to 97% attendance.

Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for every absence.

Start of the day

Top School

School starts for all children in Years 2-6 at 8.45 am. The classroom doors close at 8.55 am. Any children arriving after this time should be brought by their parents to the main office.

Top School registers close at 9.00am. Any children arriving after 9.00am will be considered late. Parents will be asked to complete a late arrival form, giving the reasons for the delay. These forms are monitored by the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager.

Lower School

School starts for children in Reception and Year 1 at 8.50 am. The classroom doors close at 9am. If children are going to arrive after this time, parents should telephone the school office so that a member of staff can come out to the gate to greet the child.

Lower School registers close at 9.05 am. Any children arriving after 9.05am will be considered late. Parents will be asked to complete a late arrival form, giving the reasons for the delay. These forms are monitored by the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager.

Attendance Register

The teachers take an attendance register using the school's Arbor system at the start of each morning and afternoon session, recording which pupils are present, and this is returned electronically to the school office. If no reason for the absence has been received via email or telephone call, a member of the office staff will contact the parent immediately to establish the whereabouts and safety of the child. Where absences remain unexplained, a member of the Senior Leadership Team is informed and further action taken.

Authorised and Unauthorised absences

The register indicates whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. An email or phone call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised.

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is absent from school for a legitimate reason, such as illness, and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. Only the school can authorise an absence. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Medical absence may not always be authorised. If the school has reason to believe that the child is well enough to be at school, medical evidence may be asked for in order to authorise the absence.

Illness

If children are ill, we would expect parents to keep them at home, both for their own well-being and to prevent the spread of infection at school. This is particularly important in the case of sickness and/or diarrhoea when children must stay at home for a minimum of 48 hours. School will alert parents to any new national/county guidelines published in the event of a flu epidemic or similar.

If a child is going to be absent because they are ill, parents should telephone the school by 8.50am at the latest with an explanation. In the interests of child safety, and to establish the whereabouts of a child, the school will telephone parents of children from whom we have received no explanation. If there is no explanation for the child's absence, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

School will contact parents if a child is absent through sickness for more than four separate days during any term, even when parents have followed the correct procedures for explaining a child's absence from school. Frequent short absences are very disruptive to a child's education and may be the sign of other underlying problems that the school is not aware of. The school believes that early intervention and dialogue with parents may help prevent a serious attendance problem developing.

In the case of a serious illness or medical condition which requires a prolonged period of absence, the schools will liaise with the family and make arrangements for setting work, and/or call upon the support and advice of external agencies to provide support and advice to the family. The school will discuss the most appropriate courses of action for re-establishing full attendance at school as the child recovers.

Response to poor attendance

- Where attendance falls below 90% the Inclusion Manager will speak to parents to express concern and to offer support in order to achieve an improvement. Support measures will be put in place and the Inclusion Manager will continue to carefully monitor the child's attendance record.
- We work in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher or Inclusion Manager (SLT) will meet with the link Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.

- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.

Statutory intervention can include:

- Parenting Contract
- Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

Punctuality

Punctuality is an important life skill which we encourage in our children at St Michael's. Arriving late puts a child at a big disadvantage. Adults can imagine their own embarrassment when they arrive late to an event, having to enter a room without causing a disturbance and trying to catch up with what has been said and join in part way through, when everybody else seems to know what they are doing. This is exactly what it is like for children who regularly start their day by being late.

Response to persistent lateness

Parents whose children are regularly late for school after closure of the register will be contacted by a member of school staff to discuss the situation. In the first instance, the school will work with the family to try to bring about an improvement in punctuality. If this does not have the desired effect, the school will seek intervention and help from the AIO.

Leaving and returning to school during the school day

The school must be notified in advance by parents if a child needs to leave the school premises during the course of the school day and clear reasons must always be given for any such absence. Medical and dental appointments should be requested whenever possible outside of school hours, but it is accepted that this may not always be possible. Parents will be asked by the office staff to sign their children out and back in during the school day.

Requests for leave of absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave during term time unless there are exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. There are 13 weeks of school holidays during the year. St Michael's School expects parents to take holidays during these periods. Term time is not the appropriate time to take a family holiday. Absence from school for family holidays will not be authorised.

Taking children out of school during term time can be damaging to a child's educational progress for the following reasons:

- Children find it difficult to catch up on the learning that they have missed
- All members of the class suffer if children take term-time holidays as teachers have to spend time helping those children catch up
- In the long term, this can have a negative impact on confidence and progress
- Based on the school's existing data, children who have a poor attendance record usually have a low attainment at the end of Year 2 and similarly at Year 6. This is backed up nationally with evidence showing that children with a poor attendance record usually do not achieve well at GCSE level.
- Children can be given very unhelpful messages about the value of learning, being on time and being responsible – all vital elements of coping successfully in the adult world.

Should exceptional circumstances arise, parents must make a written request, either by letter or email to the Headteacher, for their children to have time out of school during term time. This will be considered by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors on a case by case basis, and will only be authorised should exceptional or unavoidable circumstances prevail. Parents should bear in the mind the following conditions before making any such request:

- Each application for leave of absence will only be authorised due to the special circumstances and taking to consideration the child's attendance record and previous requests for leave.
- It is not acceptable to ask the school to provide homework or catch-up activities for children who take leave of absence during term time.
- Leave of absence will never be authorised during assessment weeks. Parents are notified of these dates well in advance.
- Long weekends, holidays arranged by grandparents or special treats and days out are not considered to be exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.

The school will, of course, treat any emergency situation that should arise in an appropriate and supportive way.